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THE NATION

MAY 22, 1976 *50 cents*

**Penny Lernoux**
**PRIESTS FOR THE PEOPLE**

## Latin America's Insurgent Church

CONGRESS ROOTS
THE CIA PROBES
REP. MICHAEL J. HARRINGTON

## *How to Ride Herd on the Budget*

**RICHARD C. LEONE**

**KEEPING THE SHORT** **R. LARSON**

MAY 19 1976

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# LETTERS

## open to suggestions

*Downers Grove, Ill.*

"The Furnace Gadget You Can't Buy" by Robert Sherrill [May 1], was in the best tradition of *The Nation*. I was so impressed by this fine piece of journalism that I carried it to work to share with some of our more conservative executives. Of course there were the usual ridiculous comments about picking on the poor giant corporations. But one officer of the company made an interesting comment: "I think the article is factual, but where's your boy, Nader?"

Perhaps he was expressing some of my own frustration. Here is a tragic example of the failure of our society. But what can I do about it? I happen to be a contributor to Mr. Nader's Public Citizen group and I will pass it on, though they are probably already informed. What should be our next step in correcting such a flagrant violation of our rights? *William M. Wilkerson*

## who cares about Ireland?

*Woodside, N.Y.*

Andrew Boyd's article [*The Nation*, May 8], on the subject of Ireland was more informative and interesting than most but, unfortunately, it holds out the same degree of hope for solution as all the others I have read: none.

There are 500,000 second-class residents of Northern Ireland and it would seem that a world at present so conscious of minorities, even when they are numerical majorities, might lend a sympathetic ear to their plight, if presented in the proper forum. . . .

One suspects that the leaders of Eire, having acquired that "respectability" typified by the silk hat and the cocktail party, have forgotten the peaked cap and the corner pub, so long symbols of an era when their predecessors were less satisfied with the *status quo*.

If Mr. Cosgrave and the British Parliament think that after 800 years the world will waken some Christmas morning soon to find "One Ireland" in its stocking, it is time they were told there is really no Santa. *Charles O'Boyle*

## folklore

*Portland, Ore.*

Harold Clurman's review of Elie Wiesel's *Zalmen or the Madness of God* [*The Nation*, Apr. 3] is an excellent summary and an admirable evaluation of the play, which is indeed "important and memorable." But the central meaning is missed. *Zalmen* is pro-Zionist and anti-Soviet propaganda, which is quite legitimate and increasingly popular with the abandonment of détente. The premise is that Jews, as Jews, are persecuted in the USSR. The memory of Czarist pogroms and of the Nazi holocaust explains why many Jews believe this falsehood. That it is believed by all anti-Communists and cold warriors goes without saying. The play's point of departure (the Ministry of Religious Affairs forbids members of an Orthodox synagogue to speak to foreign visitors) is a myth. The drama is "folklore" in fact as well as in form. If it is desirable to call a spade a spade, it is needful to recognize propaganda for what it is. *Frederick L. Schuman*

## source of violence

*Los Angeles, Calif.*

Jerry Berman's "How to Curb the FBI" [*The Nation*, Apr. 24] is informative and I can not agree more with its closing remark: "The FBI must be made to obey the law and observe the Constitution." However, Mr. Berman is mistaken if he thinks the Communist Party advocates the violent overthrow of the government and he would be hard-pressed to find any such advocacy in the Communist Party literature. We believe that change can come peacefully, and historically the violence has always come from the counterrevolution as the ruling class has not, as yet, ever given up its privileged positions peacefully. *Betty Rottger*

Cover illustration: Church of St. Francis; Pampilha, Brazil. See p. 623.

# EDITORIALS

## Common Sense on the FBI

J. Edgar Hoover was not a god. We have that on the authority of Clarence M. Kelley, the present director of the FBI. Hoover's suddenly revealed feet of clay will come as no surprise to readers of this magazine. Nearly two decades ago, in Fred J. Cook's memorable exposé of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and its crimes, *The Nation* lifted the red, white and blue curtain that concealed the misdeeds of the national police force. The first rays of light penetrated those dark corners where Hoover and his agents were doing their unconstitutional dirty work, but that was only the start toward uncovering what the FBI had really been up to in our national life.

Now, at last, we are approaching a complete picture of the dreadful history of this federal investigatory agency which became much more than that as it grew into an apparatus of domestic espionage, provocation and, finally, thought control. That picture, in all its starkness, was developed only with the full power of the U.S. Senate exercised in support of a long and expensive investigation by its Select Committee on Intelligence. Every day's news brings new revelations to buttress the basic findings of the committee, and each one seems more shocking than the last.

They expose a pattern of utter lawlessness by the police arm of the federal government. A few headlines suggest the dimensions of the scandal. ". . .F.B.I. Incited 'Gang Warfare' in Plot to Destroy Panthers," reads one in *The New York Times* (May 9). "Congressmen Were Bugged by F.B.I. Indirectly," goes another, on the next day. "F.B.I. Maligned Dr. King in Death—Bureau Also Weighed Plan to Harass His Widow. . ." reads a third, and that is just a sampling of the revelations being set before us day after day. On May 11, *The Washington Post*'s main headline read, "FBI Break-ins Still Go On, Panel Says," and the story tells of recent "black-bag jobs" with no court orders to justify them.

Two days earlier the *Post*'s lead story bore the headline, "Kelley Says FBI Is 'Truly Sorry' For Past Abuses—Publicly Puts Blame on Hoover." That was over the newspaper's account of the FBI Director's *mea culpa* speech in Fulton, Mo. (it really should be *illa culpa*, since Kelley was loading all the blame on his departed predecessor, forgetting the old Latin tag about what may be said of the dead). Kelley's speech is a remarkable document. It amounts to a plea to the American people, and to all the victims of the bureau's vindictive crimes, to forgive and forget the abuses committed in a period gone, he says, forever.

It is not the most elegant or convincing of apologies. "We are truly sorry," said Kelley, that "we were responsible for instances which now are subject to such criticism" (suggesting that if there had been no criticism there would be no need to apologize). The newly born true believer at the FBI then added: "I truly believe the mistakes to have been errors of the mind and not of the heart." Does that mean that heartfelt crimes by the government's policemen would have been worse than those



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that were merely thought up? Most of us, remembering the black record of the FBI, will find that a distinction without a difference.

There were several admissions in the Kelley speech—for instance, that "Today, the superhuman image of the FBI, and the power and glory that accompanied it, has greatly diminished." He even threw in a classical literary reference of a sort: "Amid the thunder and lightning of criticism, the FBI has descended from Mount Olympus. And, as it turns out, we are mere mortals, with human imperfections, and we always *have* been." Perhaps we are now supposed to wipe the compassionate tears from our eyes and look at the FBI as the charming kid next door. Having gone through that exercise in forgiveness, we are then brought up short by Kelley's obeisance toward the tomb of J. Edgar: "We should not utterly disregard Mr. Hoover's unparalleled contributions to peace-keeping in the United States."

Granted that the troops of the FBI who are loyal to the memory of the Great Man are said to be restive about the new revisionism inside the bureau, there is still little excuse for that kind of posthumous cosmetics. "Peace-keeping" indeed! Kelley finds himself able to say that about a man who deliberately set faction against faction within dissident groups, sometimes with murderous results, and whose use of provocateurs rivaled in viciousness that of the Czars' *Okhrana*.

Finally, Kelley promised that "the FBI will never again occupy a unique position that permits improper activity without accountability." If that is a prediction, one can only say "we'll see." If it is a statement of intent, one must say that Americans will never again trust the FBI and that the "accountability" must be determined by the Congress of the United States—certainly not by the bureau itself and not even by the executive branch in which Presidents have allowed and even encouraged the FBI to roam wild across the land, trampling on the Constitution in the interests of an alleged "national security."

The business of reforming the FBI has just begun. Congress has started to take the question seriously, but it has a long way to go before this national investigative and police force is brought to the democratic heel. It is tempting to demand the outright abolition of the agency, destroying its files and turning that giant fortress of a building on Pennsylvania Avenue, named after Hoover, into some other kind of temple. But realism tells us that our sort of society is bound to have some kind of national investigative force, that it is simply no longer possible to deny the federal government a major role, turning all the criminal investigation and prosecutorial functions of the FBI over to the states. The problem is to draw up serious controls for this agency, and it is not insoluble.

Common sense dictates a few principles that should dominate the reform of the FBI. One of them is that its processes should be opened up so that the public, and especially Congress, can observe them. That means that the bureau's budget must not merely be rubber-stamped (and often increased in amount) as it was by a complaisant Congress during the Hoover decades. Each line of the budget must be scrutinized, each function justified in the light of the strictest constitutional standards. Then the size of the FBI must be reduced and its concentrated power brought to manageable proportions. (For instance, its role

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in noncriminal matters, such as background investigations of potential officeholders, could be put in the Department of Justice, outside the FBI's reach.)

The whole matter of the agency's authority must be redefined and restricted. Periodic reports to Congress on the details of its operations, apart from its budgets, must be required and then carefully checked by Congressional committees. To borrow a concept from the Constitution itself, there must be a whole system of checks and balances within the government to control and restrain the activities of this most threatening of super-agencies, whose power over the lives and fortunes of all citizens can so readily turn tyrannical.

Finally it comes down to rights—the rights of citizens as written in the Bill of Rights, and therefore the right to liberty itself. The problem lies in the application of those constitutional protections to individuals faced with the enormous power of a modern centralized state and its administrative agencies—particularly its police. Many of the excesses of the FBI do not flout the standard categories of rights as defined by the Constitution—at least, not in the sense that there is any well-defined remedy against them. They are in a kind of administrative and judicial limbo which the normal processes of justice, however swift and fair, find it hard to reach.

We would therefore suggest that Congress vigorously explore one sort of remedy against overweening police power that has not been much discussed. This lies in the area of individual legal recourse against the government and its police force. We think, for example, that the right to privacy should be newly, and much more broadly, defined. (Thus actions like the FBI's sending of forged malicious letters would be defined as an invasion of privacy.) The Federal Torts Claims Act, which sets forth the conditions under which a citizen may sue the government, should be broadened so as to restrict still further the "sovereign immunity" which protects the government. Under present law, individuals who do manage to sue the government to seek redress for injuries are limited in what they can recover.

If a new law granted the right to recover, say, triple damages, that could have a healthy restraining effect. If each individual act to invade a citizen's privacy or First Amendment rights carried a fine of $5,000, say, it would tend to discourage certain kinds of official behavior. At present the law does not require the government to pay for the attorney's fees of such an aggrieved citizen. If such payment were required, it would surely encourage more litigation against oppressive government (to Chief Justice Burger's despair), but it would serve to safeguard the rights of individuals against their careless rulers.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT

Of giving a Nation gift subscription to a friend? A subscription is an especially meaningful gift for a young person away at school, or to anyone you feel would benefit from the news and reviews published in The Nation.

That is just one approach Congress should consider as it sets about the business of bringing the Federal Bureau of Investigation back under control. There are others, as we have suggested, and all of them must be pursued with vigor. They offer a far more reliable hope of returning to a constitutional system than the soothing words of Director Kelley, who said at Fulton, Mo., "I can assure you that Clarence M. Kelley does not aspire to ascend Mount Olympus and sit upon any divine throne."

## 007 and Mother Church

It should be easier to curb the excesses of this country's foreign intelligence apparatus, principally the CIA, than its domestic counterpart. The agents abroad, skulking around upsetting foreign governments and propping up our "friends" among the multiplying dictatorships, are less obviously connected with this country's "national security" than those who, in more innocent days, caught Nazi spies landing from submarines on our beaches. But apparently it is not that simple to control the system that runs our thousands of would-be 007s.

The Senate has been having a serious struggle, which it would be excessive to call heroic, over how to bring the intelligence establishment under some kind of Congressional authority. One Senator, fearful of the consequences of bringing the matter to the Senate floor, got off the wonderful line that floor debate would be "a civil war in which everyone would get a black eye." That kind of warfare must be one step of escalation above a pie-throwing battle.

It now looks as though a compromise will be worked out between the warring barons of the Senate defense establishment, so that at least a new committee with specific functions of supervision can be set up. But the price is to allow one center of Senate conservatism, the Appropriations Committee, a share of the power. The truth is, as Rep. Michael J. Harrington makes clear in an article in this issue, that Congress has little stomach for any serious attempt to control the espionage and "special operations" system that was spawned during the cold war and has flourished in the period we have been pleased to call "détente." He points out, among other things, that not one person has been indicted for crimes committed in the name of national security, despite the abundant evidence, and that none of the administration officials who seem so clearly to be lying when they testify before Congressional committees on these affairs is being prosecuted for perjury by either the Department of Justice or the Congress which was thus contemptuously treated.

Harrington makes the gloomy, but probably accurate, prediction that it is apt to take "another generation before an opportunity recurs to address the important issues of intelligence and national security." This because Congress was so timid about grasping the nettle of intelligence and uprooting it once its prickly poisons had become evident.

In another article in this issue, our Latin American correspondent, Penny Lernoux, describes the resurgent and increasingly radicalized Catholic Church of that hemisphere and how the CIA has acted to counter its reformist work. Two-thirds of the Latin American people now live under dictatorships and these oppressive regimes


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are the "friends" of the United States because they are "stable"—that is, anti-Communist. Ninety per cent of the population are baptized as Catholics and the tens of thousands of priests, nuns and bishops who serve them are becoming increasingly radical in their reaction to the institutionalized injustice and repression of the ruling regimes. Ages have passed since there has been anything to match this highly organized clerical resistance to unjust systems of government.

These dedicated Catholic leaders represent the best hope for change and genuine stability in a continent of 310 million. It is therefore extremely depressing to find the intelligence network of the United States everywhere working hand in glove with the oppressors to frustrate the sensible and humane work for social justice of so much of the Catholic Church. It is all done, of course, for the sake of what Henry Kissinger often calls "world order." This dirty work in the interests of reaction has the precisely opposite effect, apart from its sad human consequences. Nothing could be more appropriate for Congress to investigate and try to control, if only it had the spirit to do so. That spirit seems miserably lacking.

## Ford's Power of the Purse

As candidate Gerald Ford—in his secondary capacity as President—pondered whether to sign or veto the revised Federal Election Law, it cannot have escaped his notice that he himself has been the least injured by the delay in unfreezing the matching federal campaign funds. It is hard indeed to imagine that this thoroughly political man spent much of his time debating the constitutional merits of the new scheme in a detached, *pro bono publico*, way. Instead, an air of personal and partisan calculation hung over Washington as he went about making up his mind. Finally, circumstances dictated that the delay had been harmful enough to his rivals and that now he stood to gain more than they would from signing the measure.

All the other aspirants to the Presidency, Republican and Democratic, have been seriously harmed by the delay in making these matching funds available for their campaigns. Some have been more hit than others, depending on their ability to raise money privately, during the weeks since the end of the grace period allowed by the Supreme Court after it declared certain parts of the Federal Election Act unconstitutional.

Is this perhaps the moment to recall the operation of that giant vacuum cleaner run by Maurice Stans in 1972, sucking money for the Nixon campaign out of every crack in corporate America's board room walls, and to remind ourselves of the consequences of that massive corruption?

Ford pretends to be studying the text of the new law, finally passed by Congress, that would have turned on the federal faucet as soon as he put his name on it. There are aspects of it that are said to bother him. One of these bothersome features may well be reflected in the claim by business and conservative outfits that its provisions make it hard for the corporations' political committees to exert the same influence as the labor unions' equivalent groups. Big Business is always claiming to be the little brother of Big Labor, and the claim, in true equity, has often been proven false. The weight of business dollars more than matches the organizing power of the unions, especially in the age of the bought political image.

It is not hard to dress such claims in quasi-constitutional rhetoric, and the White House has already done so in order to account for the President's delay. The problem with this tactic is one of credibility. Ford has such a clear political stake in delaying the distribution of the federal electoral dollars that his purported musings on the public benefit of the revised funding law are simply unbelievable. As long as he can exert the influence of his incumbency to sweep up campaign contributions, and as long as he can use the credit of the White House to buy airline tickets and TV time on the cuff, the scales are tipped heavily against Reagan, who must borrow against his expectations and pay cash for services received.

The Democratic panjandrums of Congress are not all that innocent either. They have been playing all sorts of games with the idea of an impartially administered federal funding of national politics. If they cannot control the process by appointing the election commissioners, which the Supreme Court said was unconstitutional, they want to see to it that the Federal Elections Commission is as responsive as possible to their own political needs. And there have been horrid reports that some of the legislative maneuvering has been clearly in the interests of the ardent noncandidacy of Hubert H. Humphrey.

One does not need to be for or against the candidacy of anyone (even the outrageous Reagan) to deplore the way this electoral "reform" has been handled by the Executive and Congress. The whole idea of limiting the malign influence of money in politics has almost disappeared just a couple of years after it entered the political arena. The heralded breath of fresh air has turned stale. The way in which this democracy elects its "public servants" is vital to its healthy survival, and the calculating behavior of the President and Congress over the Federal Election Law has done the body politic nothing but harm.

## Spring Fervor

It is nice to know that Jimmy Carter does not have a monopoly on love in this year's Presidential campaign. Barry Goldwater has some of it too (not that he's running, praise be). The object of the Arizona Senator's affection is none other than Ronald Reagan, toward whom, he says, he feels both "love and affection." This ardor has not prevented Goldwater from supporting Gerald Ford for the GOP nomination, or from attacking Reagan quite vigorously for "gross factual errors" and behaving in an "irresponsible manner" on the Panama Canal issue. Perhaps he regards Reagan, his fellow Sun Belter, as something of a prodigal who can be redeemed from an error that "could needlessly lead this country into open military conflict." We will await the reaction of the Buckley brothers before we say "amen" to the prayer of Barry Goldwater for the salvation of Ronald Reagan.

Speaking of "amen," that was the word intoned by a Baltimore audience the other day after Reagan's curiously similar successor as Governor of California, Jerry Brown, had given it a sermonette on unemployment and the evils


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thereof. "We have to win the respect of our own people at home before we can win respect in the world," said the young anti-government candidate, and he added, "Can't we figure out how to put people to work?" Maybe "we" can, but quite obviously he can't or he wouldn't ask "us." Ommmmmmmm.

## Target Kissinger

It is disconcerting to find oneself on the same side as the wrong people, whatever the reason. Ronald Reagan disapproves of Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State. Readers of this magazine know that we disapprove of him. Reagan accuses Kissinger, in effect, of being soft on communism and of giving away the American patrimony (the Panama Canal) to the Reds. We and others like us accuse Kissinger of a rigid hegemonic view of the world which excludes considerations of decency and any progress toward a sensible world order.

Kissinger, meanwhile, hangs on, sturdily unaffected by all the criticism—either from the likes of us or from the cave-man side of the Republican Party. Ford would probably like to throw him overboard to lighten the load of past policy, but he cannot figure out how to do so without stumbling. He had a chance to dump him before the primary season opened, but chose instead to dismiss James Schlesinger, whose superior ways did not sit well with this plain man of the people. Kissinger won out in that power struggle and so he goes on executing tired policies in which even he can hardly believe any longer.

Recent polls seems to show that about one-third of the American people agree with us, and Reagan. The rest think more or less well of Kissinger. Foreign policy (that is to say, the policies of Kissinger) seems to be the only issue that stirs the Republican Right, and that wing is about all that is still alive in the Grand Old Party. Politics, as they say, makes—well, move over in bed, Ronald Reagan.

## Cultural Blockade

The State Department's renewed campaign against Cuba took a nasty and childish turn this spring with the sudden and unexpected denial of travel visas to five Cuban artists, several scholars and a religious leader long scheduled to attend conferences in the United States. For years Cuban artists and scholars were routinely banned from this country under the archaic provisions of the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act, which prohibits the State Department from granting visas to persons remotely connected with the espousal of world communism. In December 1974, the State Department relaxed its restrictions and since then has sought waivers of the anti-Communist strictures on behalf of Cubans seeking to visit the United States on cultural, religious and scientific missions.

In recent weeks the State Department has abandoned this enlightened policy. Reading Dr. Kissinger's statements on "Cuban conduct" in Angola, lesser State Department officials informed the directors of the Los Angeles International Film Exposition (FILMEX) on March 15 that "the time was not propitious" for a visit, planned since last October, of a delegation from the Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematograficos (ICAIC). The delegation, which was also scheduled to visit the Pacific Film Archive of the University of California in Berkeley, was made up of such noncontroversial figures as actress Alina Sanchez, cameraman Julio Simonau, ICAIC administrator Saul Yelin and directors Santiago Alvarez and Tomas Guitiérrez Alea, the latter of the critically acclaimed and widely shown *Memories of Underdevelopment.*

American pique does not seem limited to the Cuban filmmakers—whose documentary on *The Bay of Pigs*, shown without them present at FILMEX, might have proved a genuine embarrassment to an administration busy developing "contingency plans" for a fresh invasion of the island. The State Department has seen fit to protect the graduate students and college professors of the Latin American Studies Association from exposure to the two film directors who were supposed to attend FILMEX, but also to the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Havana, a member of that university's U.S. Studies Department, and a representative of the Federation of Cuban Women. Here the haste with which the State Department made its about-face is particularly apparent, in that the organizer of the conference, Dr. Richard Fagen of the Political Science Department of Stanford University, received a written assurance on February 10, from William Rogers, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, that the Cubans could obtain visas.

Nor does Dr. Kissinger seem to fear placing God on his enemies list. In early April, the leading theologian of Cuba—Dr. Sergio Acre Martinez, Rector of the Evangelical Seminary at Matanzas—was denied a visa. He wished to attend two international religious conferences near Washington, D.C. Dr. Kissinger does, however, appear to have a weakness for the finer arts, and for visa-granting when it makes political hay. Thus we find him (*The Washington Post*, April 7), at the ballet in the Kennedy Center at Washington "flanked by Liz Taylor on one side and Liza Minnelli on the other" leading the standing ovation for the performance of Cuban ballerina Alicia Alonso, who gave up a spectacular career with the American Ballet Theatre in the 1960s to create the Ballet Nacional of post-revolutionary Cuba. In any event, the cultural war on Cuba, like the military war on Vietnam, will produce wounds that are largely self-inflicted. The haste of the ban on Cuban visitors has been amply demonstrated. It should be reversed as quickly. *William Bates*

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*William Bates is an editor of the college newspaper at the University of California, Berkeley.*

## Agnew Exhumed

What could Barbara Walters and her handlers at NBC have been thinking about when they invited Spiro T. Agnew to appear on her *Today* show to plug his "novel"? It was certainly not journalism they had in mind, but it could have been entertainment of the peep-show variety or just the celebrity game.

Agnew is, after all, a celebrity of sorts. His peculiar



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distinction is that he was the only Vice President in our history ever to quit his office in a deal with prosecutors (to avoid going to jail for exacting and accepting bribes). That may look good in the *Guinness Book of Records*, but nowhere else, and surely not on a broadcast that purports to be a form of journalism.

All this would not be worth noting except for two things. One is that Barbara Walters has just received the ultimate accolade of broadcast journalism—money, at a million-a-year clip, when she takes over ABC's nightly news later this year. There she will be practicing (in both senses) journalism instead of chatting with celebrities, big and little, between the Alpo dog-food commercials she delivers with such understated gusto.

The other thing to note is what the still-unruffled Agnew had to say, and not say. He set ground rules for this TV appearance which excluded any talk about his slightly criminal past, partly on the stated grounds that this seamy story is his "property" and that he means to exploit it in his memoirs. (To Miss Walters's credit, she tried to penetrate that no-sound barrier, but her guest repeatedly cut her off in mid-sentence, and the net effect was that she and NBC News rolled over and played dead for Agnew, just like the hero of the Alpo commercial.)

What Agnew graciously agreed to talk about was his fictional fantasy of power and lust in Washington and his views on his old adversaries, the "media." This time there was an even nastier twist to it than usual. He attacked his enemies with the disgusting old weapon of anti-Semitism, in the newly chic guise perfected by the Arabs at the U.N. of "anti-Zionism." Agnew accused Israel of "aggression" in settling the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip, adding that "Zionist influences in the United States" made this country regard that as "permissible." He made the further ridiculous comment that these same mysterious forces caused us "not to separate the Arabs into what you might call militant Communist-oriented Arabs and the Arabs that support free enterprise systems!"

It is thanks only to the aggressive prosecutors in Maryland that we do not now have the spectacle of President Spiro T. Agnew going around the country talking of war and peace and a better life for all mankind as he runs for election to the nation's highest office.

Shame, if he would recognize the word, on S. T. Agnew. And shame on Barbara Walters, the millionaire aspiring journalist of utterly commercial broadcasting.

CAPITOL HILL OUTSMARTED

# CONGRESS BOOTS THE CIA PROBES

**REP. MICHAEL J. HARRINGTON**

*Washington*

The extraordinary failure of the Congressional investigations of the intelligence agencies to produce reform—or even an enhanced public awareness of the problems—is a striking political victory for the national security establishment and its allies. The victory is the more striking because the political professionals on the Hill were outsmarted, outpoliticked, and finally routed by the technocrats and bureaucrats at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

The rout comes on the heels of a year's celebration of the resurgence of Congressional power and authority, following the war in Vietnam, Watergate and impeachment. Our resurgence in the area of foreign affairs was especially well advertised and supposedly embodied in such statutes as the War Powers Act, the Commitments Resolution and the prohibitions on use of force in Southeast Asia.

Four and a half months after the resignation of President Nixon, the Congress voted to investigate the inner sanctum of the national security establishment, the intelligence agencies, and thus raised hopes for the urgently needed restructuring of the cold-war apparatus and its surrounding mythology. Now, fifteen months later, we have, if anything, turned the clock back. The House Intelligence Committee disbanded in disarray after its final report was published in *The Village Voice*, and no new oversight or reform legislation has even been contemplated in the House. The traumatic effects of the *Voice* leak and the killing of Athens CIA Station Chief Richard Welch have taken their toll also in the Senate, where at this writing there seems little or no chance to establish a meaningful oversight committee—something that a year ago was regarded as the bare minimum of reform to be expected from the investigations.

It is tempting to conclude that Congress has been subverted by the same forces that subverted Salvador Allende and Martin Luther King—that in effect the intelligence agencies mounted a covert action against the Congress to discredit its public image, mainly by leaking information to the press and then blaming it on the Congressional investigators. Naturally there were leaks, and although their source has not been established, the administration has created the strong impression that they came from Congress. While a case can be made that the administration had a stronger motivation than did Congress for leaking classified information, we may never know the facts. In any case, the administration's political purpose was served.

It is my view that in all probability there was no conspiracy to discredit and thwart Congress, and that the failure of Congress in this instance reflects a deeper and

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more troubling institutional failure. It would be more comforting to assume a conspiracy or covert action by the executive, because the culprits might then be discovered and punished, and our faith in institutions would remain intact. It is a time-honored credo of the American political tradition that failure and adversity are the result of corruption and malfeasance on the part of individuals or small groups. Thus the Nye investigation into the causes of World War I pointed to the venality of the munitions makers, and thus McCarthy sought the causes of the cold war in the disloyalty and weaknesses of State Department and armed services personnel.

*It would, however, be a dreadful error to explain the* failures of the Congressional intelligence investigations—or indeed the misdeeds of the intelligence agencies—by conspiracy theories or individual acts of irresponsibility. The problems are institutional, fundamental to the functioning of the federal government. The CIA is the limiting case—the most extreme instance—in which exposure would discredit not individuals but an institutional process, undermining confidence in the agencies and the assumptions of the entire national security establishment. Thus, at least in the administration's view, the disclosure of abuses would not reassure the people about the ability of the system to cleanse itself. Instead of reaffirming the legitimacy of the government's authority, it might seriously undermine it.

Regrettably, this point of view was also accepted in great measure by the Congressional committees running the investigations. From the outset great pains were taken to demonstrate that Congress was "responsible," that House and Senate were worthy of being admitted into the secret chambers of the executive branch. As a result, the Congressional investigations were on the defensive from the beginning and never seized the offensive. When the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence began its investigation of CIA assassination plots, it decided to proceed exclusively in secret, thereby abdicating its responsibility to show the American public that an agency responsible for misdeeds of that magnitude could be called to public account. Senator Church argued that he did not want to "hold up this sordid story before the world." Then, after the Senate committee had spent five months investigating assassinations behind closed doors, the President made a predictable appeal to suppress the committee's written report on the subject, and Church complained that "concealment is the order of the day." Fortunately, the Senate did vote to release the report, but the precedent had been established that the imperatives of secrecy in the interest of national security could determine the mode of Congressional procedure. At least *that*, it was clear, would not be changed.

Publication of the assassination report alone should have been convincing evidence that our institutions had badly malfunctioned. Instead of driving home that point, the opposite impression was conveyed, even by such respected liberals as Senator Mondale, who concluded: "We're not any good at assassinations, and thank God!" In other words, although we cannot drag our spies out into public view to account for their misdeeds, we can be reassured that they are good old incompetent American spies who are bad at what they do because they are Americans, and are therefore harmless.

The acceptance by Congress of the executive's ground rules for secrecy and security was an early and ominous concession of the prerogatives of a supposedly coequal branch of government. It is appalling that Congress would accept the proposition that it had to prove itself worthy before it could receive and use on an equal basis information classified by the executive branch. And yet a few days after being named chairman of the Senate committee, Senator Church announced that any member of the staff who leaked would be fired; the CIA was permitted to come to the Senate to approve the security mechanisms and "debug" the premises; and the CIA still refused to allow much of the most sensitive material to be physically transmitted to the Congress, after requiring the investigative staff to work at the agency.

Perhaps the most damaging institutional feature of the investigations was the establishment of deadlines for their completion. Even though the cutoff dates, especially in the Senate, were extended, the message was conveyed at the outset that there *was* a deadline. In such a situation even the most simple-minded adversary would adopt a strategy of delay, and that is precisely what the administration did to great effect. Instead of putting the executive on notice that the investigations would be concluded when Congress was satisfied with the results, the committees were in the position of having to explain to their parent bodies why they had not met the original deadlines and to request new ones.

A third institutional difficulty was committee staffs. In the House the staff was too small for the task: thirty-three in all. The Senate committee had the opposite problem: a staff of 133 persons who, according to press reports, did not always pull in the same direction. The result, on the Senate side, is that large quantities of staff reports remain classified and unabsorbed by the political process. The House staff has become the object of an internal House investigation to determine who leaked the final report to Daniel Schorr, a clear warning to those in the future who may feel that disclosure serves a public purpose.

The political consequences of the constraints placed on the investigations have been simply disastrous. The most costly result was the failure of either committee to hold coherent and sustained public hearings. That public education is a major function of Congress was demonstrated beyond any doubt by the Senate Watergate hearings in the summer of 1973. While the CIA investigations were not entirely analogous to the Watergate affair, the need for public education was in some ways even more pressing. The war in Vietnam had provided conclusive evidence that the judgment of the executive branch about threats to national security was calamitously flawed. In the wake of that experience, Watergate gave proof that a President could exploit the national security mythology for explicitly partisan political purposes. We now know that the misuse of the FBI for political purposes started with Franklin Roosevelt, and that paranoia about opposi-



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tion to the war in Vietnam drew the CIA into domestic politics. The need in 1975 was to define the proper and constitutional limits of what could be done in the name of national security, beginning in the obvious place: the intelligence agencies.

The House Intelligence Committee gets better marks on this score than does the Senate, although the House committee failed to sustain a thorough examination of the basic issues. The Senate committee did not commence its hearings until September, when the issue's momentum had considerably diminished. And then, inexplicably, the Senate chose to begin with lengthy hearings on the CIA's retention of shellfish toxin against the wishes of the President. The boredom of these hearings caused the networks, and even public TV, to take the Church committee

Hugh Haynie, Louisville Courier-Journal

off the air. Thus, when a few hours of hearings were finally held in November on covert action and CIA meddling in Chile, they went unbroadcast and largely ignored.

We are now paying the price for the failure to hold informative hearings, because the field of battle for access to the public mind was left to the administration. Now that the sole legislative product of the investigations, a bill to set up an intelligence oversight committee in the Senate, is in deep trouble, there is no informed public, no constituency, from which to draw support for even modest reforms of the *status quo*.

While the Congress was defensively trying to prove to the executive branch that it was a trustworthy and reliable partner in national security and intelligence policy, the administration had no intention of being converted. Instead it skillfully exploited Congress' defensive position. The theme of the administration's strategy was that the executive branch should regulate itself and the most effective way to make a persuasive public case for self-regulation was to represent Congress as inherently irresponsible, particularly in safeguarding classified information. The first move seems to have been to avert a Congressional investigation altogether by creating the impression of executive self-regulation. Thus President Ford responded to the sensational disclosures of CIA domestic spying by appointing the Rockefeller Commission to investigate. Director Colby acknowledged to the Senate Armed Services Committee that the CIA was indeed guilty of wrongdoing in this area. When word of the CIA assassination plots reached the press, that subject was added to the mandate of the Rockefeller Commission. The climax of the self-regulation strategy was the President's Executive Order of February 18, 1976, purporting to carry out an adequate internal reform of the intelligence agencies, and thus relieving Congress of the task. No committee of Congress even held hearings on the Executive Order.

The crucial event in the administration's campaign was the handling of the killing of Athens CIA Station Chief Welch in December 1975. David Phillips, founder of the Association of Retired Intelligence Officers, attacked those who were "unnecessarily exposing intelligence operators," and Welch was buried as a national hero after the plane bearing his body was kept in a holding pattern over Andrews Air Force Base so that its arrival could be covered live on morning network news programs. In short, the administration seized on this tragic event to launch a public relations blitz against all disclosure of information about intelligence activities. Members of Congress, at home for the Christmas recess, quickly got the word from their constituents: no more exposure of CIA activities.

Self-regulation by the executive depends on nonregulation by a complacent Congress. It is precisely the discredited mechanisms of past oversight that are now being preserved for the next generation. The quality of the traditional pattern of oversight was revealed in a CIA memorandum of February 1973, dealing with the CIA's strategy to cope with the Senate investigation of the ITT-CIA Chile affair. The memo, as stated in the House committee report, suggested that Sen. Henry Jackson, long a member of the Senate Armed Services CIA Oversight Subcommittee, help take the ITT investigation away from Senator Church's Multinational Corporations Subcommittee: "Senator Jackson repeatedly made the comment that in his view the CIA Oversight Subcommittee had the responsibility of protecting the agency in the type of situation that was inherent in the Church subcommittee. As a result of this conviction, Senator Jackson would work with the agency to see that we got this protection."

It is not my view that the purpose of Congressional oversight is to protect *any* federal agency from the ex-



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posure of its abuses and excesses. My point is that Congress must share a large part of the blame for the failure to reform the intelligence agencies. To say that we were tricked by the clever professionals of the CIA, who cannot shoot straight in Havana, but can run circles around two Congressional committees, is to miss that point. In the face of the administration's pro-secrecy onslaught, the Congress could have defended itself only by making a specific and compelling case for the misdeeds of the intelligence agencies. In other words, maximum possible disclosure is the only antidote to the complaints about leaks. Disclosure would show the public that much of what is classified is either trivial or a concealment of inefficiency and ineffectiveness; whereas the misdeeds were real, in some cases criminal, and in many cases violations of our most fundamental political beliefs.

As it is, no individuals who may have committed criminal acts in the name of national security have been indicted by the Justice Department, although no one disputes that criminal acts were committed. The apparent perjury of administration officials before Congressional committees is not being pursued by the Justice Department or the Congress. And the body politic is still disturbed by some of the questions left unanswered by the investigations, not the least of which is the apparent CIA cover-up of anti-Castro assassination plots at the time of the Warren Commission's deliberations.

In all likelihood it will be another generation before an opportunity recurs to address the important issues of intelligence and national security. Only by a truly objective understanding of what took place this past year will we be in a position to take advantage of whatever opportunities are afforded in the future. And that objectivity will be hard to achieve if the blanket of secrecy and concealment is allowed to suffocate the democratic processes of a free people. □

PRIESTS FOR THE PEOPLE

# Latin America's Insurgent Church

**PENNY LERNOUX**

*Bogota*

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19.) Thus did Jesus Christ announce His mission at the beginning of His public life in a synagogue in Nazareth.

Although the language of the gospels has changed very little in the nearly 2,000 years since Christ's birth, cultural interpretations have tended to alter their real significance. Encumbered by bureaucracies and traditions that grew out of different historical circumstances, Roman Catholicism evolved over the centuries into a conservative institution that lost touch with the poor. And this, more than materialism, rationalism or Marxism, explains the religious crisis in Latin America.

While nine out of ten Latin Americans are baptized Catholics, eight of those ten are poor. Not only are these people still deprived of the good news promised by Christ, they do not even understand what He was saying. For the illiterate Indian peasant who brings flowers or incense to the gold-encrusted Churches, Christ and the Virgin Mary are deities to be propitiated. The magnificent statues dressed in gold leaf are as remote from his understanding as is the message of a Man who lived on another continent 2,000 years ago.

Debased by five centuries of Spanish rule, the peasant accepts these gods because they belong to those with power and wealth. But they are strange deities with white skin and golden hair. Only rarely, as in Port-au-Prince's Episcopal Cathedral where the figures in the religious paintings are Haitians, is any native expression of Christ's life encouraged.

Ironically, were it not for Marx, Catholicism could be written off as a cultural tragedy in Latin America. But because of the peculiar needs of this developing continent, Marxism has achieved what the Reformation could not; it has opened a window in Catholicism. The first cracks of light became apparent in the mid-1960s, when young theologians began to question the historical basis of Latin American Catholicism. Enthusiasm for Christian Democracy and its "developmental" philosophy was already on the wane, and these young men turned to Marxism as an analytical tool to understand the causes of economic and social underdevelopment in Latin America.

It was their belief that Christian theology had grown stagnant from its emphasis on the Greek deductive process of thought. "A deductive theology imposes its own, prior idea of God on Christ, and if He does not fit it, He is twisted and deformed to achieve that purpose," explained Rafael Avila, a Colombian theologian. The inductive process, on the other hand, moves from reality to idea, from experience to theory. And it was one of the original tenets of the Judeo-Christian tradition. As Avila points out, "The whole Bible, Old and New Testaments, is really the history of Israel and of Jesus, set forth in the most varied literary genres. The event always preceded the Word."

Marx's particular attraction for these theologians was his suggestion of the interrelationship of experience and theory—that if man had sufficient understanding of his reality he could improve that reality and himself and that this new situation would in turn influence, change and educate him. Their study of Marxism also suggested the need for scientific tools to interpret reality, and thus sociology was given importance, in its own area, equal to



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that of theology. Working with these tools, the theologians developed a series of new religious and sociological insights based on Latin America's historical condition as an economically and politically dependent continent. Appropriately, their work was called the theology of liberation.

Although many of their conclusions are now taken for granted by Latin American economists and sociologists, they were pioneers, for they used the social sciences as a guide to theological development. Moreover, it was a development based on the realities of Latin America and not on the pat generalities that the Church had used for so long to rationalize social inequalities. Just as the worker priests in Europe described the grimness of factory life in the 1950s, these Latin Americans used their experience in slums and impoverished rural areas to substantiate the statistics of poverty and their demands for reform.

Their analyses probably would have been dismissed as the exaggeration of a fringe group had it not been for the coincidence of the Vatican's Council II (1962-1965), with its concern for a more democratic Church and for social and economic justice. Having come home to Latin America, the bishops began to look around them in light of the council's teachings. While few understood the inductive processes of the new line of theological reasoning, they did grasp the meaning of sociological studies and the statistics of poverty. The majority had only to look out of their palace windows to confirm the enormous social and economic inequalities of Latin American life.

Thus came about an extraordinary meeting in 1968 in the Colombian industrial city of Medellin, the stage for which was set by a visit of Pope Paul VI to Bogota, where he emphasized that his presence was intended as an encounter with Latin America's poor. "In our wandering mission we wish to personify the Christ of a poor and hungry people." But he also made an appeal to the rich:

"What can I say to you, men of the ruling class? What is required of you is generosity. This means the ability to detach yourselves from the stability of your position which is, or seems to be, a position of privilege, in order to serve those who need your wealth, your culture, your authority. . . . You, lords of this world and sons of the Church, you must have the genius for virtue that society needs. Your ears and your hearts must be sensitive to the voices crying out for bread, concern, justice and a more active participation in the direction of society."

While Paul made little attempt to explain the causes of poverty in Latin America, the bishops spelled them out at the subsequent meeting in Medellin in a scathing attack on the continent's ruling classes, foreign capitalism and social injustice. Known as the Medellin documents, the hierarchy's criticisms have become a rallying cry for reform in Latin America as well as a precedent for Catholic Churches in other developing regions.

Sponsored by the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM), the bishops' service organization, Medellin was possible because the Vatican itself was preaching reform. It is also true, however, that many of the documents, particularly the explosive "Justice and Peace" denunciations, were the work of the Church's progressive young theologians and sociologists and some sympathetic bishops. It took the basically conservative Church another two years to comprehend the Pandora's box it had opened, containing, my God, of all things, a Marxist analysis of Latin America's ills. The alert was sounded in three countries—Peru, Chile and the United States.

One of the few progressive hierarchies at the time, the bishops of Peru followed up Medellin with their own criticisms of poverty and injustice. Under the influence of a Center-Left military regime, they denounced "a situation of injustice. . .that is the result of a process with worldwide dimensions. It is characterized by the concentration of political and economic power in the hands of a few and by the international imperialism of money, which operates in league with the Peruvian oligarchy." When a copy of these statements turned up in West Germany, it gave the Europeans such a scare that they set up a commission to investigate what was going on in Latin America.

Meanwhile, an extreme left-wing group of priests in Chile called "Christians for Socialism" was beginning to flex its muscles under Salvador Allende's government, frightening hierarchies all over the continent with the vision of radical religious militants. Indeed, such groups had already come into being in Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil and Argentina, carrying on the legend of the Colombian guerrilla-priest Camilo Torres and his espousal of violent revolution.

Adding fuel to the fire was a series of books and religious encounters sponsored by the Latin American Bureau of the U.S. Conference of Bishops. Aimed at promoting social justice in Latin America, they succeeded in further frightening the bishops—not to mention the Vatican. By 1972 the Church was rapidly retreating from its position at Medellin. At the annual CELAM meeting in Sucre, Bolivia, many of the departments that had employed the young progressives were dismantled and a conservative leadership elected to make sure the Church did not repeat the follies of four years earlier. But it was too late to turn back the clock.

Although comprising only a small minority of Latin America's priests and nuns, such militants as "Christians for Socialism" made enough noise to cause the clerical majority to consider the reasons for that militancy. Church surveys showed that most priests and nuns believed political partisanship incompatible with the religious role; only a handful were prepared to follow the example of Camilo Torres, who died in an army ambush in the Colombian Andes in 1966. But because these few were closer to the people than were the bishops, with a daily experience of poverty, many gradually came to the conclusion that the Medellin documents were basically correct in their description of the causes of poverty and injustice in Latin America. This was particularly true for the North American and European religious who comprise one out of three priests in Latin America and a much higher percentage in such countries as Bolivia and Peru. As a Spanish Jesuit in Ecuador explained, "Living this reality is the quickest way to *radicalizacion*."

"People in the United States cannot conceive of the misery and injustice in Latin America because they have no yardstick to compare it with, even in the worst city


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slum," added a Texas missionary.

"Most Americans have a reasonably good standard of living, and for that they thank capitalism. But if they lived in a Latin American slum or in a peasant village for a few years, they would share the conclusion of so many of us that foreign capitalism must take part of the blame for the misery of these people. Just look at Brazil, the foreign investors' paradise, where the price for 'development' has been the progressive impoverishment of a majority of its people."

Given the weight of institutional traditions and the authority of the bishops, it is quite possible that the lower orders' concern for social justice might have never gone beyond talking about a commitment to change. But because Vatican II had broadened the Church's scope, making clergy and laymen as important, in their own way, as the bishops, CELAM's order to shelve the Medellin documents was not sufficient to end the religious ferment. On the contrary, when CELAM dropped the banner at Sucre, the Latin American Confederation of Religious (CLAR) picked it up.

With 170,000 priests and nuns representing 457 orders, CLAR was in an excellent position to carry on the dialogue begun at Medellin, and many of the progressive theologians and sociologists who had worked with CELAM moved to CLAR. Thus it has played a major role in the religious awakening of the past four years with 400 hemisphere conferences and national seminars and a constant flow of publications emphasizing the need for a better understanding of the economic and political causes of poverty and injustice in Latin America. Last year, for example, the Bogota-based organization held six courses for Latin American mother and father superiors, many of whom subsequently organized their own local courses to pass on the "good news" of a commitment to the poor.

Unlike the Marxist guerrilla warfare preached by Camilo Torres, CLAR's commitment is nonviolent and nonpartisan. Arguments by right-wing Catholics that CLAR's stance is political are correct as far as they go, but they miss the point that, because of the Church's importance in Latin America, anything it does—or does not do there—has a political connotation. The difference today is that the commitment of the religious is to change, not to the *status quo*. The conservatives fail to perceive that, quite apart from moral issues, the statistics of Latin American religiosity make it imperative for the Church to side with the poor.

As one of the Medellin preparatory documents pointed out, "There is a grave danger that the future construction of the continent, which is in conformity with the divine will, will be carried out not only outside the faith, but in opposition to it."

It was the base, not the bishops, that first realized the full dimensions of the erosion of Catholicism in Latin America. Though 90 per cent of the 310 million people are baptized Catholics, making Latin America the largest Catholic population in the world, less than 20 per cent understand what being a Christian means. And that explains CLAR's political tilt toward the poor. "The fundamental question that must guide us is how to tell our brothers, to tell all men, of the love of God in a context of undernourishment, illiteracy, economic dependency, political margination, unemployment and unjust wages," states a CLAR document entitled "Religious Life and the Political-Social Commitment."

"Is it God's will that an Indian child should die of hunger, or is it because of my country's feudal land structures and the subhuman poverty of 2.4 million Indian peons?" asked Father Delfin Tenesaca, an Ecuadorian Indian priest. "How can we expect people to be generous, loving Christians when it is a daily struggle to obtain enough money for even one bowl of meatless soup?" added Father John Halligan, a Brooklyn-born Jesuit working with Quito's slum children.

Confronted with this sort of reality, CLAR maintains that no spiritual revival is possible in Latin America until the people's physical well-being is improved. The Church must "insist that celestial goods are already here in this world," it explains.

Unlike the United States or Europe where attempts at religious revival are still bogged down in theological hairsplitting, the Latin Americans have based their rescue mission on the survival issues of poverty and injustice. For example, CLAR defines the vow of poverty as living, eating and working with the poor and identifying with their frustrations and aspirations, language and cultural traditions. Likewise, sin and salvation are no longer interpreted from a narrow, individualistic viewpoint but are seen in a collective context of unjust structures and human exploitation which can be eliminated only by a commitment to social action that will liberate the oppressed.

CLAR President Carlos Palmes reports an "exodus" to the slums and impoverished rural regions by priests and nuns formerly stationed in wealthy or middle-class dioceses. The Sacred Heart Congregation, for instance, has announced that its new educational projects will be started only in the poorer regions of Latin America. The Jesuits at their last world congress also agreed that an option for social justice for the poor is an essential part of evangelization. And in countries as diverse as Venezuela, Bolivia and Argentina, nuns are leaving the schools of the rich to start social action programs in the slums and rural areas.

Although CLAR recognizes the value of traditional good works, such as hospitals and orphanages, the emphasis today is on teaching the poor to exercise their rights and responsibilities in cooperatives and labor unions, Indian communes and community action groups to learn what democracy and participation mean.

"Priests and nuns are like the oars of the boat; without them a bishop cannot row," runs a Church saying. And that is increasingly evident in Latin America. While ecclesiastical authority still is a basic precept in the Latin American Church, the bishops can no longer expect the flock to follow blindly where they lead—not after Vatican II opened the floodgates. Moreover, with only one priest for every 5,000 baptized Catholics (in the United States, there is one for each 730 Catholics), every priest and nun in Latin America counts. Consequently, there has been more consultation and more exchange of ideas between bishops and priests, and in that sense the base is gradually


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"teaching" the hierarchy.

Though important and fundamental, CLAR's work does not in itself explain the remarkable turnabout that has occurred in the hierarchy since the CELAM meeting in Sucre. Not only have the bishops come full circle to their original position at Medellin; the majority are now ready to act as well as criticize. They also accept one of the basic tenets of the theology of liberation—that Marxist analysis need not be accompanied by a Marxist philosophical interpretation.

Bishops and priests agree that the primary cause of this change in attitude is external. With the sudden upsurge of military dictatorships and the increased violence in Latin America during the past four years, many hierarchies have been forced to protest, particularly over the violation of human rights. By February of this year, when the bishops met in Bogota under CELAM auspices to review the Medellin documents, even the conservative Colombian hierarchy was preaching "liberation."

As the bishops explained in a document on human development, the situation in Latin America has considerably worsened since 1968:

> It is enough to point out the progressive and constant violations of human rights that are daily denounced under governments of all political persuasions.
>
> Moreover, many of these [violations] are accompanied by increased militarism. But even in those [countries] that are not governed by the military, there has been a failure to encourage a fair distribution of wealth or a reduction of the tremendous social and economic differences which were denounced at Medellin.
>
> While it is true that many of these evils are common to all mankind, there can be no doubt that they have been exacerbated in our continent because of its past and present dependence, political confusion and social injustice.

Archbishop Aloisio Lorscheider, president of the Brazilian Conference of Bishops and of CELAM as well, is even more forceful in his criticism: "We are seeing institutionalized violence in the form of extremely strong repression. The rationale of security is not acceptable when it means destroying human beings. This is the socially critical and prophetic position that the Church takes in light of the gospel in its fight against sin.

"We also believe that the economic system does not take sufficient account of the need for respect and development of the human being, but emphasizes money and profits instead."

Lorscheider feels that it is time the hierarchy followed words with actions, particularly now that there is "widespread regret" for the Church's historical role in Latin America as an ally of the rich. "We hope that as a result of the meeting [in Bogota] the Church will assume a stronger stand in today's society in support of the development of the Latin American people, or what we describe as the liberation of every human being to become an active agent in his or her destiny."

The Guatemalan bishops, once the most conservative hierarchy in Central America, are an example of this changed approach. According to Bishop Luis Manresa, CELAM's second vice president, the February earthquake that destroyed large areas of his country is being interpreted by the Church as a sign of the need for religious and social reform. Instead of immediately rebuilding the forty-nine churches partially or totally destroyed, said Manresa, the Church will concentrate its financial resources on helping the homeless and poverty-stricken.

*Shrine of Bom Jesus de Matosinhos; Congonhas do Campo (Brazil)*

As the Guatemalan bishops explained in a recent pastoral, the earthquake was "a voice from God that drew aside the curtain that was hiding reality and the painful story of people being lacerated by injustice, of men crushed by oppression, of a living Church torn by disunity and the negative witness of all Christians, bishops included, who are spiritually ill, grasping for power and engaged in the devastating fratricidal battle that has bloodstained the soil of the nation and brought grief to so many homes.

"So much suffering would be even more tragic," they added, "if we failed to heed the call to join forces to construct a new nation with new men who, as the gospel teaches, know how to be free and responsible. Guatemala cannot be the same as it was before the terrible morning of February 4."

Like most Latin American countries, Guatemala presents enormous contrasts between a small, wealthy minority and a mass of peasants who eke out a bare existence on tiny agricultural plots, or *minifundia*. Two per cent of the ranches occupy 70 per cent of the arable land, while 88 per cent of the farms are squeezed onto 14 per cent of the



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land. The annual income of these subsistence farmers is less than $300. Two-thirds are illiterate.

The statistics of poverty are not unique to Guatemala, nor are they new. Poverty and injustice have been a feature of Latin American life ever since the Spanish conquest. They have become an issue only because of the coincidence of a series of other factors that put pressure on the bishops.

On the one hand, there is the challenge from the right-wing military regimes that claim a monopoly on Christianity, thereby questioning the Church's traditional authority over moral matters. On the other is the growing number of priests and nuns who have developed a social conscience and are in opposition to these regimes. But perhaps the most important factor is the religious crisis in Latin America that threatens the Church's very survival.

As a result of the plunge in vocations, attendance at Mass and use of the sacraments, the Church has been forced to take a hard look at its institutionalized apparatus, including the thousands of schools in which it has educated the continent's upper and middle classes. Church statistics show that these groups have traditionally been the backbone of Latin American Catholicism, providing priests, nuns and bishops, money, land and temporal influence. Whatever the causes, there has been a marked drop in support by middle- and upper-class youth since World War II, a decline that grew steeper during the 1960s. Because of this erosion, the Church has gradually turned to the impoverished masses for support.

While Latin America's poor have a deeply religious cultural tradition, their links with the Catholic Church have always been tenuous. With the exception of traditional good works, little attempt was made to reach the masses through schools or social action programs. A middle- or upper-class priest, educated in urban seminaries, usually found it impossible to understand or identify with the cultural values of illiterate peasants, even though anthropologists have amply documented the importance of such values. In areas with Indian or African populations, the communications breakdown was almost total, since no attempt was made to synthesize the customs and beliefs of a Spanish Christian heritage with those of the native populace.

This situation is now changing in many Latin American countries. Either out of genuine concern for the poor or because of a realistic assessment of the situation, hierarchy and base are gradually assuming a new role as spokesmen for, and servants of, the poor. In Mexico, for example, the Jesuits have closed or are closing many of their schools for the upper classes, including the prestigious Instituto Patria. Funds from the sale of these properties are being used to finance educational programs in the Mexico City slums to help stem an illiteracy rate that is expected to climb to 50 per cent by 1990 if new schools are not opened.

CELAM's Missions Department is following an innovative course to help the Church communicate with the masses. According to Maryknoll missioner John Gorski, the department's executive secretary, the Church is making "profound studies of popular faith as expressed in voodoo and spiritism, for example, in order to understand the people's language and means of expression. The problem with the missionary was that he imposed a foreign culture on the people. Such appurtenances as schools and hospitals had little cultural meaning within society, except for a privileged minority who by education were foreign-oriented and therefore the worst possible witnesses to their own culture."

Many missionaries believe that a natural extension of popular faith is the married priest. This is due less to a debate over the spiritual importance of celibacy than to the realities of Latin America with its severe shortage of clergy. Missionary programs to encourage vocations among native peoples frequently are unsuccessful. For example, only two out of 1,000 Aymara Indians who started a seminary course in Peru and Bolivia actually were ordained. For marriage is a prerequisite for spiritual leadership among the 3 million Aymaras, who have an unbroken cultural tradition dating back to the Fifth century B.C.

In addition to his spiritual influence, the married native priest has the advantage of usually being a leader in his community, and this combination of religious-civic awareness is basic to the Church's work of social awakening.

"Why must a community find itself incapable of frequently commemorating our Lord's passion?" asked Lorscheider. "Why can't the community choose for itself someone who will then be deputized by the bishop for the celebration of the Eucharist? Naturally there comes to the fore the problem of married priests, or rather, of the ordination of already married men where it may be necessary for the celebration of the Eucharist.

"This doesn't mean that the celibacy of the priest is not needed, but along with it, where the need demands it, why cannot there also be married priests! It is a problem of which the Church in Latin America is very much aware."

Although Pope Paul reportedly is sympathetic to the Latin Americans' dilemma, he has refused to sanction married priests, claiming that it is impossible to make an exception for one continent. Nevertheless, the Church has quietly gone ahead with experiments in Brazil and Peru.

New types of native vocations, such as married diaconates, are an important part of the Church's mission to bring Christianity back to the people through grass-roots base groups, using local language and rites. Similar in spirit to the primitive Christian communities, these groups are a school for democracy in which the Scriptures are used as a textbook to analyze political and economic events in a village or a slum block. The level of analysis is very simple, since none of the participants has had the privilege of more than two or three years of primary education. Nevertheless, the analysis is extremely profound in its honesty and in its generosity toward fellow men. Though a base group member would find it impossible to describe his situation in scientific jargon, he is able to reach an understanding of that situation in his own language and terms. That is the essence of the theology of liberation: if a poor man can understand the causes of his misery, he will be better prepared to improve his standard of living. It is the seed of a new, more Christian society in which all Latin Americans enjoy equal rights.

With some exceptions, notably in Colombia and Argentina, there is general agreement among theologians, clergy and bishops that the base groups are the best way to



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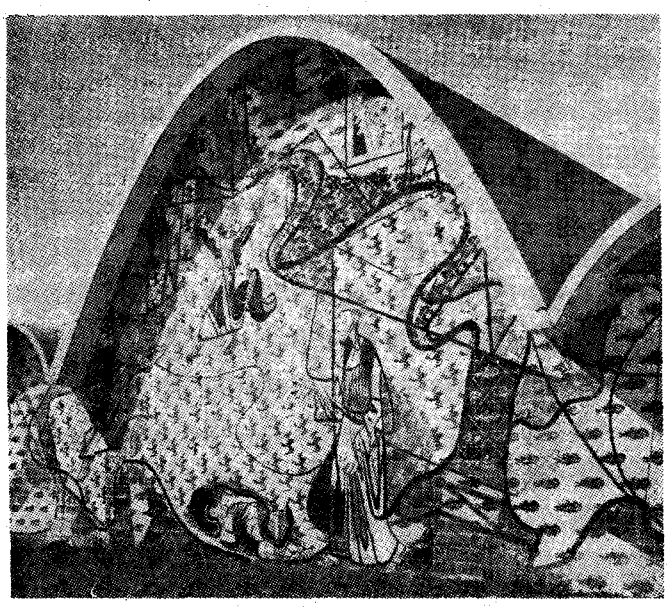
achieve a religious revival. But while pioneer work in Brazil showed the way in the early 1970s, it is only in the past four years that Latin American theologians have begun to understand the real dimensions of the base groups.

Just as repression forced a change in the bishops' attitudes, the experience of military regimes, particularly in Chile, caused the theologians of liberation to re-examine their earlier position. Peruvian Gustavo Gutierrez, who is generally recognized as the outstanding proponent of the theology of liberation, is typical of this change in thinking. A brilliant intellectual who first formulated his ideas in a Lima university campus, Gutierrez came to recognize the limitations of his theology in that it was the product of his experience with university students, traditionally the most radical segment of Latin American society. Since few poor Latin Americans finish primary school, much less attend a university, Gutierrez in effect was taking the viewpoint of a select social elite, repeating the classic error of Latin American reformers who imposed solutions on the bottom from the top. It was an error that Salvador Allende also made, and it played a part in losing him his government and his life.

While Chilean slum dwellers and peasants are more politically aware than most Latin Americans of their class, they lacked sufficient civic maturity, or Christian charity, to carry out a gradual, peaceful revolution—a failing many of Allende's own Socialists shared. As one slum dweller explained during the Allende administration, "I was in favor of Allende, and as a worker I naturally supported the union's takeover of our machine shop. But I don't like the way things have been going since, with the only qualification for promotion being membership in the party. The new foreman is a stuck-up fool who couldn't even sharpen a knife. This makes me angry because I take pride in my skills as a machinist and don't see why I should be ordered about by this man just because he belongs to the party. Furthermore, I'm tired of spending half my time at the factory at political meetings."



*Church of St. Francis of Assisi; Pampilha (Brazil). Oscar Neimayer is the architect; the murals on tile, are by Candido Portinari.*

Although the opinion of this slum dweller was not possibly shared by a majority of Chilean workers, he did describe a failing of the Allende government. Many Allende sympathizers within the Church have since concluded that the reforms Allende proposed were impossible unless the people were first "conscientized" to civic responsibilities and the need to share in a better society. Otherwise, "the oppressed simply become the oppressors," as a currently popular religious refrain points out.

"It is a terrible price to pay," said a Chilean theologian, "but the Pinochet regime has been a cleansing experience. People who used to say that a Marxist revolution would be carried out at any cost, even if it meant killing wealthy Chileans, have changed their opinions entirely because they themselves have suffered imprisonment and torture. They and their families now know that the political price is too high in human suffering." (As in Uruguay, which also is run by a right-wing military regime, a popular art has emerged from the prisons emphasizing love of fellow man and forgiveness.)

The experience of Chile also made the theologians realize that a theology of the masses must evolve from the experience of the base groups. Gutierrez and other theologians are therefore investigating the history and symbols of "popular religiosity." This not only means rereading the Scriptures in the current framework of poverty in Latin America. It also is the beginning of a whole dictionary of new religious definitions to explain the meaning of God in the natives' own terms and rites. Indian rites may be different from those of the Christians, but they are not necessarily in contradiction with the post-conciliar Church. "These differences should not put [the Indian] in the class of heretic or pagan," said Victor Ochoa, who works with a Catholic cultural research center in Puno, Peru.

Another important lesson resulting from Allende's overthrow is that revolution cannot be rushed in Latin America if it is to be meaningful and truly Christian. "If Cuba set a precedent for Latin America during the 1960s, the rise and fall of Allende is the lesson of the 1970s," explained Argentine theologian Enrique Dussel. Camilo Torres's model of the guerrilla-priest likewise is seen as a phenomenon of his decade. In contrast, today's universally recognized prophet is Brazil's Dom Helder Camara, who follows Gandhi's nonviolent methods of protest.

The clergy's disenchantment with violent tactics, combined with the violent repression of hierarchy and priests in seven Latin American countries, has greatly contributed to a new sense of unity and mission in the Latin American Church—so much so, believes CLAR President Carlos Palmes, that it "is at the richest moment in its history."

However, it is also true that the Church faces an unprecedented challenge from the military regimes that rule two-thirds of the Latin American people. Already, there are dozens of examples of the new sort of religious martyr predicted by Msgr. John Joseph Fitzpatrick, president of the Latin American Division of the U.S. Conference of Bishops. Repression ranges from the im-



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prisonment of priests and nuns to the closure of Church schools and radio stations and, in the extreme cases of Brazil and Uruguay, the threat of, or actual, expulsion of bishops.

The martyrdom described by Fitzpatrick bears little relationship to the spectacular death courted by Camilo Torres: it is another sort of risk and commitment, the quiet courage of unarmed people working against all odds in slums and impoverished rural areas. Last year two such men were killed in Honduras, one an American, the other a Colombian. Fathers Jerome Cypher and Ivan Betancourt were brutally tortured before they were murdered by the henchmen of the large landowners in Olancho Department in eastern Honduras. Their crime had been to support a local peasant union.

Just how serious the attack has become may be judged by Chile, where an extreme right-wing Catholic group called the Society for Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) is trying, with the government's blessing, to split the Church. (A right wing of the Lutherans succeeded in dividing Chile's Lutheran Church last year by supporting the government's decision to prevent the return to Chile of Lutheran Bishop Helmuth Frenz, who had been active in human rights work.)

Founded in the 1960s under the influence of a similar organization in Brazil, Chile's TFP recently published a nasty hatchet job on the hierarchy in a 500-page book called *The Church of Silence in Chile*. The book describes the bishops as "unfaithful to their ministry and direct accomplices of the enemies of God and country," and urges laymen to denounce them. Now in its third printing, the TFP publication represents one more assault in the escalating attack on the Church for its defense of human rights.

Supported by the Papal Nuncio, Cardinal Raul Silva struck back with the threat of excommunication. Said Chile's bishops: "They [the TFP] divide the world into extremes of either the 'good' or the 'bad,' and they deny all rights for the 'bad,' especially the vanquished. They play into the hands of their avowed enemies. . .by their frenzied cult of hostility against all who do not militate in their same group, making their destruction a requisite for self-survival."

"Heretic, I had not been called before," added Cardinal Silva. "It is another feather in my cap."

Similar smear campaigns have been directed against Brazil's bishops, particularly Sao Paulo's outspoken Paulo Evaristo Arns. When words have no effect, there is often recourse to violence, typical of which was the recent bombing of the San Salvador diocesan printing shop which publishes the Church's weekly newspaper *Orientacion*. Right-wing reactionaries have taken strong issue with the paper's critical pastorals written by Msgr. Luis Chavez y Gonzalez, the 75-year-old archbishop of El Salvador's capital. Led by Chavez y Gonzalez, the country's bishops have condemned the repression by Col. Arturo Armando Molina's regime and blamed poverty and inflation on local hoarders, multinational corporations and the consumer economy. The bishops have also protested the massacre of peasants and police brutalities in clashes with students.

In an interview after the bombing, the archbishop stated that "the people of El Salvador are highly dedicated to work, and I would thank those who are responsible for maintaining peace and order if they would give these people the opportunity to emerge from the poverty in which they find themselves to a state more worthy of a human being."

It is this sort of plain speaking that has caused the hierarchy so many problems in Brazil and Chile. As Lorscheider points out, "Oppressive regimes are afraid of a conspiracy against the established order and we are questioning that established order."

The role of prophet has never been easy, however, particularly when in conflict with entrenched political and economic interests. In Latin America it poses a series of hazards, both spiritual and physical. When bishops and priests protest, for example, it is not only at their personal risk. A frequent critic of Brazil's military regime, Dom Helder Camara, says with justification that "the only reason I haven't yet been jailed is because I am a bishop." Yet many of Dom Helder's followers have suffered imprisonment, torture and even death because of their association with him. The burden of that pain is clearly etched on the face of the gentle bishop.

As Jesuit writer Brian Smith notes, the Latin American Church must also confront the dilemma of how to protect its institutional network, because without schools, newspapers and radio stations, for example, its prophetic voice would be greatly reduced. No organization is more aware of this than the Central Intelligence Agency, which has been actively helping the generals to undermine the Church, according to Catholic sources. Church informants in Bolivia confirm a CIA plot hatched in the Interior Ministry early last year to harass progressive bishops and arrest and expel foreign priests and nuns, who represent 75 per cent of the clergy in Bolivia. The CIA was reported to be particularly helpful in supplying the ministry with data on U.S. and other foreign missionaries.

"The plan was not written on paper but discussed in the ministry and later reported to us," recounted the superior of a Bolivian order. "But it doesn't matter whether it was on paper or not, or if it was approved by the minister. The fact is that since then five foreign priests and nuns have been expelled, while a sixth, an American, was murdered in still unexplained circumstances."

"No one takes chances any more," said a U.S. missionary, explaining why fifty Maryknoll missionaries walked out of a meeting with the U.S. Ambassador to Bolivia, William Stedman Jr., when he turned up with labor attaché John La Mazza, who was reported to be the CIA contact with the Interior Ministry.

A similarly ominous coincidence of events took place in Chile last October when Bishop Carlos Camus, secretary general of the Chilean Bishops' Conference, came under attack after a tape of his off-the-record comments during a dinner with foreign correspondents turned up in military and pro-government newspaper offices. Although Bishop Camus' statements concentrated on the country's social and economic situation, certain remarks were selected by the afternoon daily *La Segunda* to suggest that the Church was controlled by Marxists.

Alvaro Pineda Castro, the Colombian journalist respon-



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sible for the leak, gained access to the dinner as a representative of a small Bolivian newspaper. It so happens that between 1960 and 1968 Pineda worked in Chile as the general manager of a news agency called Orbe Latinoamericano. Philip Agee's *CIA Diary* describes Orbe as "financed and controlled by the CIA through the Santiago, Chile, station."

If the U.S. Government is supporting activities to undermine the Church's influence, then it is indeed serious—and not just because of the implications for Latin America. It also means that, instead of protecting the interests of the 11,825 Catholic and Protestant missionaries in Latin America, U.S. Embassies may actually be helping to destroy them.

Even without CIA support, Latin America's generals are formidable foes because, as the bishops themselves recognize, the Church may act as society's conscience but it has no real power to force reforms or a change in government. Thus the hierarchy faces a serious dilemma: criticism invites repression, yet silence could cost the Church its future following among the masses.

With all its current limitations, the Church is the only surviving institution in the continent's military regimes that offers some hope of change. Its task is to reach the mass of the people in its evangelization and renewal programs, writes Father Smith, since "awakening in them a sense of personal dignity, hope and confidence that they can change their fate will be crucial not only for the vitality and integrity of the Church as a gospel community, but also for the future shape of Latin American societies."

Or as Dom Helder says: "Come, Lord, do not smile and say You are already with us. Millions do not know You and to us who do, what is the difference? What is the point of Your presence if our lives do not alter?" □

THE 'SUNSET PROPOSAL'

# How to Ride Herd on the Budget

**RICHARD C. LEONE**

*Trenton*

Until recently, progressives viewed Congress as the enemy of change. Much was made of the "stranglehold" of ancient conservative committee chairmen and of the coalition between Republicans and Southern Democrats. The Congress proceeded slowly, if at all, and opportunities to delay or kill a program far outweighed the prospects for enactment. A liberal like Joseph Clark, then a Senator, called the national legislature "the sapless branch."

But for more than a decade now, the progressives have been dominant in Congress. Sometimes in partnership with the executive, but now more often against Presidential wishes, the Congress has been enacting and funding hundreds of progressive domestic programs. They have set before the people and the state and local governments, a $60 billion smorgasbord of grants-in-aid and related programs—up from $12 billion for this portion of the budget in 1966.

Much of what has been done has had a good effect; nearly all of it is well intentioned. But with power, sooner or later comes accountability, and these liberal successes have now spawned doubts, even among liberals, about the wisdom of all this spending.

A good many people who not long ago would have opposed anything that made it easier to kill a program in Congress, have come to believe that we should take a fresh look at the more than 1,500 domestic spending programs, and find new ways to evaluate the defense and foreign affairs portion of the budget.

A symbol of this changing attitude is a bill now before the Congress, sponsored by Sen. Edmund Muskie (D., Maine) and supported by members of both parties, the so-called "Sunset Proposal." (The name originated with a proposal backed by Common Cause in Colorado.)

In effect, the bill would create new Congressional opportunities to kill programs, and it would also subject programs to close review and critique from within the government itself. The essence of the proposal is that nearly all federal programs should expire after four years, unless re-enacted by the Congress after thorough consideration by both the executive and the legislative branches. The bill also establishes a zero-base budgeting system for the federal government, similar to that currently in use in several states, including New Jersey.

The notion is that all federal programs, with the exception of some of the mandated expenditures, would be grouped into four categories:

(*1*) National Defense, International Affairs, General Sciences and Law Enforcement and Justice.

(*2*) Agriculture, Commerce and Transportation, Community and Regional Development, all Education, Public Assistance and other income supplements (public housing only).

(*3*) National Resources, Environment, and Energy, Health, Income Security (except public housing), and Veterans' Benefits and Services.

(*4*) Training and employment, other labor services, Social Services, General Government and Revenue Sharing and General Purpose Fiscal Assistance.

Each year, the spending authority for programs in one of the categories would expire, unless individually re-enacted after the review process. During the year preceding scheduled expiration the programs would be analyzed by the

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Office of Management and Budget, the Congressional Budget Office, and the General Accounting Office.

There is little doubt that the major public debate of the next decade will focus on seeking a solution to the increasing costs of government programs, given the limits of available resources. These limits may soon become "real" in economic terms; perhaps even more important, they are already apparent in political terms. It is evident that, whatever the real economic constraints on government spending, we are at or very near the limit of the public's will to see a larger and larger share of national income spent in the public sector.

The Democratic Governors, who are getting so much attention for espousing this view, have not all abandoned liberal principles, nor have they given up the fight to reverse the trends of decay and urban blight in their cities. What they have been forced to do is recognize that there are limits to what their governments can do about these problems. This recognition, sooner or later, will have to come also at the federal level.

I draw a distinction between those officeholders who perceive their jobs—and popularity—as deriving from *asking* interesting questions about spending, rather than *answering* such questions. Governing, as I understand it, involves meeting problems—but given the inevitable limits on time and resources (financial and political) it also involves choosing among both competing demands for action and alternative responses to problems. And, already short of money, many urban governors and mayors understand, as Hugh Carey puts it, that the days of wine and roses are over. In New Jersey, in 1975, Governor Byrne noted, "There has been, perhaps, a touch of mindlessness in the steady increase in public expenditures. A period of fasting may be a good thing for state government. . . ."

There is a need in such times to heighten the "tension" in the process by which federal programs are developed. The forced re-examination aspect of the Sunset bill does just that, and is a sensible antidote to the way we have had it in the last ten years. Zero-base budgeting may help as well.

From the standpoint of policy makers, the budget process must be judged ultimately by how well it helps them to evaluate and compare competing demands—and thus to make choices. In fact, given scarce resources, an effective process should appear to force choices. Too often these choices are masked by routine or are only vaguely perceived because of the sheer complexity of large public budgets.

The zero-base approach moves policy makers away from the traditional "incremental" approach to budgeting by requiring every agency, in effect, to construct its budget from 0 to 100 per cent or beyond of current appropriations. At least theoretically, Congress and the President will then be able to review options for each governmental activity at various spending levels.

This approach also tends to reveal just what the constituency is for every program. This is important in the democratic system. Programs ought to have a constituency or they are probably not worth continuing. There is probably nothing better than the discussion of total dismantlement as a short cut to finding out who supports a program, how much importance they place on its continuance, and what those people have in terms of alternatives.

The zero-base approach also allows policy makers to deal more effectively with the question of equity in spending public tax dollars. We frequently look at equity in terms of how money is raised—that is, who pays how much. But there are also arguments of equity in terms of how the money is spent.

In New Jersey, for example, it costs us about $500 in state money per Medicaid recipient. It also costs us about $500 in state money to provide the rail subsidy for each rail commuter. Few of the latter group think of themselves as equivalent to "people on welfare" but they cost us about as much. This type of analysis makes it easier to determine who gets hurt and who gets helped by budget decisions.

The zero-base approach is not without its disadvantages. It is hard to measure output in government, even harder to judge the value to society of output, and it is difficult to judge what you really buy at different levels of expenditures. Obviously, such an approach cannot be applied across the board to every governmental agency. Little will be accomplished by having the federal prison system prepare a zero budget, since it is not at present a realistic option to close prisons and release inmates. It may be an option, under severe fiscal pressures, to reduce particular programs within the prison system.

Despite the disadvantages, the zero-base approach probably is superior to other ways of cutting a budget—especially to "across the board" cuts of a given percentage, which assumes that, no matter how scarce the resources, every program maintains its same level of importance. Zero-base budgeting, indeed common sense, tells us that it is not so. Organizing a budget is not just an exercise in arithmetic. Some parts of a state budget, for example, pension payments, may grow at a mandated and very high rate. Others increase because of change in conditions or federal policy.

Whether the zero-base approach would succeed, should it be adopted by the federal government, is open to question. In New Jersey, it has had a measure of success because the state has a constitutional requirement to maintain a balanced budget and has faced two years of marginal revenue growth and rapidly growing needs, particularly in three areas: Medicaid, Public Assistance and educational support for local school districts. Ultimately, the need to meet a target for budget cuts was more of a force in weeding out unneeded spending than any procedural change in budgeting.

The federal analogy with this process cannot be exact because of the crucial role federal spending policies play in the national economy, but the requirements of the new Federal Budget Act may be one way for Congress to force itself to meet budget targets. Another way would be to require agencies which propose spending increases in some of their programs to suggest offsetting cuts in other programs they administer.

In the end, when dealing with scarce resources and marginal dollars, all you can do is try to look at how many



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people are going to be affected and to what extent. In doing so, you may reveal what the extra dollars mean.

There is no magic in any budgeting system. The zero-base approach is better than others but it cannot be a substitute, nor should it be, for the political process which determines budget outcomes. I suspect that as the competition for scarce public dollars intensifies, the purely "political" aspects of the process will become an even more important determinant of the way we spend public dollars.

The Sunset Proposal can force clear choices on the legislative and executive branches; it may help to stop the process of spreading money around, maintaining programs indefinitely and never facing up to the need to abandon failed activities.

There remains a nagging doubt, however, that because of the size and persistence of some of our social problems, it is unrealistic to test and perhaps abandon programs after three or four years. The political process tends to leaven attempts to concentrate resources and solve very deep human problems. Because of this tendency toward superficial and slow-moving programmatic activity, it may be that even after a few years' experience with a program only a few of its options will have been tested. There is no reason why a good program analysis cannot point out that this is the case and urge the continuation of a program, and perhaps concentration of resources.

Reassurance on this point is important if you believe, for example, that some of our key problems—education of the underprivileged, redevelopment of central cities, etc.—require a specially concentrated and tenacious approach.

But finally, one shouldn't worry much that programs will be judged too harshly or curtailed prematurely. There is no evidence that the present system is working to meet social problems efficiently, or even providing the kind of framework in which it will be more likely that decisions to deal with those problems will be made. Euthanasia for failed or failing programs may, in the long run, enable us to breed a set of federal responses to our most urgent human needs which have the strength and focus actually to make a difference. □

THE CHEMICAL ENVIRONMENT

# DON'T BREATHE ON THE JOB

**STEPHEN D. SOLOMON and WILLARD S. RANDALL**

Robert Pontious mixed chemicals for sixteen years at the sprawling Rohm and Haas chemical works in Philadelphia before developing lung cancer at the age of 43. Several months before his death in October 1972, Pontious told his doctor the shocking news that thirteen of his buddies had died of lung cancer after similar exposure to bis-chloromethyl ether (BCME), used in the production of water-purifying ion exchange resins. By now the count of deaths attributed to BCME at Rohm and Haas and other plants in the United States and abroad has gone far beyond that number.

The release of chemicals into the environment has become a serious public health problem. "Workers today are like the miners' canaries that were an advance warning system for poisonous gases in the mines," says Sandy Stephenson, an aide to Rep. Dominick Daniels (D., N.J.). The U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has estimated that at least 100,000 workers die each year from occupational diseases, many of which are caused by chemicals such as BCME, vinyl chloride, asbestos and kepone. But if the miners had the good sense to evacuate the shafts when the canaries began dying, Congress and the public have ignored the warning signs.*

As a result, 60 to 90 per cent of the more than 365,000 Americans expected to die of cancer this year will have contracted the disease from environmental factors, including cigarette smoke and industrial chemicals, according to the National Cancer Institute. And the American Cancer Society estimates that one out of four Americans alive today will ultimately develop some form of cancer. Many more will die or be seriously disabled by chemicals which attack the nervous system, the lungs and other organs.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 gives the federal government power to control occupational exposure to dangerous chemicals once they are on the market, but with the exception of pesticides, drugs and food additives, the government has no authority to require testing of chemicals *before* they are manufactured and distributed. That oversight makes workers and the general population a testing medium for the more than 500 new chemical compounds introduced each year and the 2,000 existing chemicals which HEW believes can produce carcinogenic or other toxic effects.

Having failed in 1972 and 1974 to enact legislation, Congress is again considering a Toxic Substances Control Act that would require manufacturers to test new chemicals before introducing them; it would give the Environmental Protection Agency authority to ban or restrict the use of chemicals which the tests showed to be dangerous. Although Russell Peterson, chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, says the legislation

*For a broad survey of carcinogens in current use by industry, see "Getting Cancer on the Job" by Larry Agran, *The Nation*, April 12, 1975.

*Stephen Solomon and Willard Randall, winners in 1975 of a Sydney Hillman Foundation Award, are completing a book on occupational health,* Building 6, *to be published by Little, Brown.*



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"would have discovered the carcinogenicity of both chemicals (BCME and vinyl chloride) before they were introduced," thereby saving lives, it is threatened with defeat for a third time by intense chemical-industry lobbying that has concentrated on the economic impact of new federal regulations.

Opportunistically, industry focused on costs just as the nation was slipping into its economic recession. The Manufacturing Chemists Association (MCA), the industry's powerful trade group, inaugurated a year of doom-saying in December 1974 by warning EPA that the proposed legislation "will destroy the industry's competitive position in world markets at a time when its contribution is needed to maintain the economic strength of our country." In April, Earle Barnes, president of Dow Chemical Company, told a Senate subcommittee chaired by Sen. John Tunney (D., Calif.), the major sponsor of the bill, that his proposal would cost the industry a catastrophic $2 billion a year and cast 6,500 workers into the already crowded unemployment pool. MCA was back on Capitol Hill in July, passing out copies of its own study which warned of $1.3 billion in new costs and a loss of up to 20,000 jobs. Tough legislation, MCA President William Driver concluded, "presents horrendous cost implications to our civilization."

Industry's apocalyptic language and cost figures have not gone unchallenged. EPA estimates an annual cost at just $80 million to $140 million—not overwhelming for an industry that had profits after taxes of about $5.5 billion in 1974. And in a report released on October 21, 1975, the General Accounting Office dismissed the Dow study as "unsophisticated" and said the MCA study had "several important defects." GAO projected the likely cost of the legislation at a modest $100 million to $200 million a year. When he attempted to look further into the discrepancies, Senator Tunney was told by MCA that the information on which it based its cost figures was confidential.

To drive home its points, the chemical industry has staged a massive letter-writing campaign to Congressional offices, and has sponsored working breakfasts for entire state delegations. Last December, Dow President Barnes, who opposes any federal controls, wrote twenty-one of his top subordinates that he wanted "to encourage the broadest and strongest possible grass-roots political action campaign in opposition to Toxic Substances legislation." Barnes enclosed a thick packet of information, including canned sentences and paragraphs, to stimulate employee letter writing. Since then Dow employees have flooded Congressional offices with letters opposing the bill, including a typewritten form letter from one worker who, at the bottom, scribbled a message of support for the legislation and told Sen. Philip Hart (D., Mich.) that "my company here in Midland encourages me to send these form letters to my Representatives."

Most of industry has been backing a weak version of the bill, sponsored by Rep. John Y. McCollister (R., Neb.), in an attempt to head off Tunney's tough measure. McCollister would require manufacturers to test only those new chemicals which EPA lists in advance as likely to pose a substantial danger to health or the environment—an unworkable approach built on some presumed psychic ability of EPA to inventory dangerous chemicals even before their invention. Tunney also uses a list but adds an important and controversial safeguard: companies would have to notify EPA ninety days before manufacturing unlisted chemicals, and EPA could require testing of those as well.

The Ford administration supported the McCollister bill in the last Congress, where both versions died in a conference committee that was so hopelessly deadlocked that it met only four times in more than a year. But in the early summer of 1975, as evidence of chemically induced cancer mounted, the administration reversed itself and endorsed Tunney's measure. John Quarles, EPA deputy administrator, told a House subcommittee on July 10 that McCollister's provision requiring EPA to publish a list of dangerous chemicals in advance was "the single most offensive feature of any of the bills under consideration." Without a notification provision, he said, many dangerous chemicals were likely to slip undetected into production.

McCollister wrote to James Lynn, director of the Office of Management and Budget, complaining about the administration's shift of position. He could count on Lynn's help: as general counsel of the Department of Commerce in 1970 and 1971, Lynn had weakened the original version of the bill before it was sent to Capitol Hill as part of President Nixon's environmental program. Now he eagerly took McCollister's complaint to the White House—as did the chemical lobbyists. On October 15, twenty-one chemical company executives met with White House officials. Their spokesman, James Affleck, president of American Cyanamid, complained that Tunney's bill "would impose an unnecessary and unacceptable burden on our industry and on the economy in general." Less than a month later, without mentioning any new circumstances which would warrant a change of position, Lynn wrote to McCollister that the administration had reconsidered and would again support his bill.

The Senate passed its tough version on March 26 by a 60 to 13 vote, and a House subcommittee for the first time has cast aside the weak McCollister bill and reported a version similar to Senator Tunney's. Its opponents are now working to delay consideration of the bill by the full House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee beyond May 15, since the 1974 Budget Act requires that legislation authorizing new spending be reported to the House floor by that date or forego appropriations for the coming year.

Rep. Harley Staggers (D., W.Va.), chairman of the committee, has decided to clear routine appropriation bills from his committee calendar before tackling toxic substances. It's doubtful that he'll meet the May 15th deadline; he's been unable even to gain a quorum for most committee sessions.

Despite the heavy lobbying, the frightening repetition of chemical tragedies may propel legislation to passage this year. The B.F. Goodrich Company reported in March that it was investigating a high incidence of leukemia deaths among rubber workers at its Port Neches, Texas plant. It may turn out that these, like thousands of other chemical deaths, could have been prevented by the law that is still idling its way through Congress. □



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# BOOKS & THE ARTS

## Keeping the Short Story Alive

**CHARLES R. LARSON**

The arguments are well known: people do not read short stories. You can slip an occasional one into a magazine, but it will go unread by most readers, who will turn to an article instead. Collections of short stories do not sell. If this is a bad time to get a novel published (and almost everyone agrees that it is), woe to the writer who tries to interest a publisher in a collection of short stories. Editors of magazines hold short fiction in contempt—it's the new journalism that sells magazines these days, especially if it involves a little investigative reporting. For editors at book-publishing houses, the case is even more clear-cut: nonfiction on any topic has a better chance of turning a profit. Why invest in fiction? The writer of short stories, then, feels that he is doubly cursed. No matter how well he writes, if he sticks only to short stories he will never be regarded as a "grown-up" writer. No American practitioner of the short story has ever been accorded first-class status: Flannery O'Connor, Katherine Anne Porter, even Stephen Crane (an occasional novel isn't enough). Short stories are, after all, only apprentice work: adolescent exercises, or, traditionally—when there were more big-paying magazines around—minor works hacked out between novels to earn a livelihood for the writer (Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Faulkner). These, of course, are arguments that writers of short stories believe all editors hold to.

If it isn't already apparent, the writer of short stories feels that everything is against him. Some magazines that used to publish a considerable amount of fiction no longer do (*Atlantic, Harper's*), and others no longer exist (*The Saturday Evening Post, The Kenyon Review*). If the writer is fortunate enough to get a short story published in some obscure quarterly with a circulation of a few hundred copies, once it is published it is likely to be forgotten. The fact is that it is much more difficult to publish a short story in the United States than a novel, incredible as that may seem. While the number of novels (excluding reprints) published each year approaches 2,500, the number of published short stories remains about half of that—a statistic that will shortly be clarified.

Nevertheless (or perhaps in spite of these rather gloomy figures) short stories keep getting written. They are cranked out by the thousands for creative writing courses in our universities and colleges. (With regard to that thousand or so stories actually published in the United States each year, I once told a creative writing class at the university where I teach that probably an equal number of stories were written for the writing classes on our campus alone during the same twelve-month period.) *Esquire* receives each year roughly 12,000 unsolicited stories (that is, those not submitted by agents), and usually publishes two of them. *The Antioch Review* is said to publish one story for every 2,000 it receives. One might assume that a writer who has published stories in half a dozen publications would have his future clearly defined, but that is usually not the case. Most published writers of short fiction find it just about impossible to interest a publisher in bringing out a collection of their work.

A case in point is a young woman now in her late 20s who has published not only in the quarterlies but in the so-called big magazines. She was an *Atlantic* "First" and subsequently published half a dozen stories in *The New Yorker*, which one would assume would be some sort of help in attaining book publication. Yet, after a leading New York publisher *requested* her stories from her agent—for the explicit purpose of considering them for book publication—they were turned down with the statement, "These have already been published in *The New Yorker*. Why would we want to publish them?" They advised her to stop wasting her time with short stories and write a novel. Out of general frustration, this young woman decided to join the ranks of hundreds of other frustrated writers and become an academic—retreat to the campus as a teacher of creative writing—though it was not that easy for her to find a job. Creative writers are a nickel a dozen and universities know it. It's much easier for a university to pay a writer a few hundred dollars to teach part-time than to hire him or her at a regular salary.

In fairness to the other side, it must be pointed out that the work of some writers of short stories has not faced such a gloomy reception. Maybe I should say the work of one writer, anyway. Joyce Carol Oates is the exception—certainly the most successful example of a writer of short fiction in the last decade. She began publishing short stories in the early 1960s, working her way up through the quarterlies and then later through magazines of wide circulation. Then came the novels which probably earned her some money (which I assume her collections of short stories did not), but the appearance of the novels did not mean that Miss Oates would stop writing short stories. As anyone familiar with William Abrahams's *Prize Short Stories*, or Martha Foley's *The Best American Short Stories* knows, Miss Oates has continued to dominate these yearly collections—until two years ago when she found herself reincarnated into a Portuguese writer named Fernandes.* But what happened to Joyce Carol Oates does not usually happen to writers, and one cannot help but assume that if she had limited herself to short stories, she would be relatively unknown today.

I mentioned the Abrahams and Foley annuals because, perhaps more than anything else, these two yearly collections of short fiction give a certain amount of psychological support to writers of stories, otherwise facing an entirely bleak situation. The Abrahams collection, *Prize Stories: The O. Henry Awards* (followed by the year), began publication in 1919 (there have been other editors); the Foley collection, *The Best American Short Stories* (plus the year), began in 1941. Both act as encouragement for the writers themselves, guaranteeing (if a writer is fortunate enough to have his work chosen for one of them) that a short story will not be forgotten once it has appeared in a magazine. Martha Foley's volume covers the calendar year; Abrahams's runs from summer to summer, yet a certain overlap in the selections usually occurs—more than one might expect

*Charles Larson's latest book is* The Novel in the Third World.

* *The Poisoned Kiss and Other Stories from the Portuguese* (The Vanguard Press, 1975), of which Miss Oates says, "The tales in this collection are translated from an imaginary work, *Azulejos*, by an imaginary author, Fernandes de Briao. . . ."



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given the differing tastes of the editors.

In both instances, the editors read those magazines (big or little) that are sent to them, from which they eventually pick fifteen to twenty stories for their yearly collections. Some magazines, of course, do not submit stories, so we can assume that the statistics frequently given for the total number of stories read do not equal the total number of short stories actually published in the United States each year, but they would come close.

Abrahams's yearly introduction and list of magazines consulted (missing in the Foley volumes) enable one to make a number of speculations about those writers of short stories who are getting published (and reprinted) each year. The figures here cover a ten-year period, from 1966 through the most recently published collection, that of 1975. During that time, 171 stories were anthologized, sixteen to eighteen per volume. These stories were written by 130 authors, most of whom are represented by one selection alone—though John Updike has five stories during the ten-year period, Alice Adams five, James Alan McPherson four, and Joyce Carol Oates eight—the most. (Miss Oates appears in every volume except those covering 1966, 1974 and 1975. In four volumes her story was awarded either the first or second prize. In the 1970 volume, she was represented by two stories and was given a special award for "Continuing Achievement." During the most recent two years, she has eliminated herself from the running by naturalizing herself as a Portuguese. She appears with equal frequency in the Foley collections.)

Of the 171 stories in question, 101 were written by men, seventy by women. Fifty-nine of the 130 writers represented are identified as academics, a rather high percentage, suggesting that academics have to keep writing since they have to publish in order to keep their jobs—or vice versa, that short story writers hold academic jobs in order to survive. This may help account for the fact that in a given year most of the writers included in the Abrahams and Foley collections are not names familiar to readers who stick to the best-seller lists. In the current O. Henry collection, for example, there are only two well-known writers: E.L. Doctorow (represented by a short story later incorporated into *Ragtime*) and John Updike.

The breakdown of magazines in which these 171 stories originally appeared is equally revealing. Ninety-two were first published in the little magazines, and seventy-nine appeared in the so-called big ones. In only three of the ten volumes do the big magazines dominate an individual collection, a fact of continued interest to Abrahams himself. Some of the reasons for this have already been pointed out. Thus, in 1967, Abrahams writes, "We are living in the heyday of the article." And in 1971, "In too many . . . magazines the story is tolerated rather than welcomed. . . ." In the same year, he bemoans the pathetic state of short fiction appearing in the women's magazines, but he might just as well complain about the fiction printed in the men's magazines, other than an occasional story he has reprinted from *Esquire* and *Playboy*. (Nothing has appeared from *Ms.* yet, which is hardly a surprise.) In 1974, Abrahams feared that the "new journalism" might be taking over; in that volume the prize for the first story went to Renata Adler, a woman known for her journalism rather than her fiction. The most recent volume clearly represents a bumper year—for the first time two writers (Harold Brodkey and Cynthia Ozick) share the first prize.

The fact is, of course, that the statistics themselves are subject to radical change from volume to volume, though I think we can safely say that the quarterlies have generally been more receptive to short fiction than the big magazines. (Unfortunately, since many publish only one story per issue, the amount of fiction they can publish in a given year is limited.) Thus, even though Abrahams lists eighty to 100 magazines consulted each year, the total number of published stories hovers around 950 to 1,000. Scanning this list at the back of each volume, one feels a pang at the death of so many magazines that once published exceptional fiction: *New World Writing*, *The Reporter*, *Voyages*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Story*, *Evergreen Review*, *The Red Clay Reader*, *Audience*. It is easy to argue that in some cases the loss in actual numbers isn't that great. After all, *The Kenyon Review* in its last days usually published one story per issue—six a year. Yet the number of stories reprinted from *The Kenyon Review* far exceeded the number originating in most other quarterlies; and, at the time it ceased publication, it was running its now famous "International Symposium on the Short Story."

*The Kenyon Review* reminds us again just how close the relationship between academe and publishing is. The magazine, it is said, folded because Kenyon College could no longer afford to support it—the way of many another quarterly in recent years. Colleges and universities expect their professors to publish, especially if they teach creative writing, yet we are living in the days of a considerably shrunken market for such publications; even if a story or scholarly article is accepted, it may be two or three years before it appears in print. The competition to get something published is greater than it has ever been before. Graduate students find it necessary to publish before they complete their Ph.D.s in order to get an edge on the job market.

Literary criticism (or so-called "scholarship"), is a different matter, however. As its quality has sharply declined—it often appears that a critical article on any subject can get published somewhere—the quality of short fiction has improved. The scholarly writer has for long had the benefit of the university presses also, while the writer of short fiction generally has not. For that reason, writers of short stories can only welcome the University of Illinois' Short Fiction series, presided over by Richard L. Wentworth, an associate director and editor of the press.

What are the intentions of this program? According to Wentworth, "To publish four volumes of short fiction each year," in paperbacked editions priced at about $2.50 each in printings of 2,000 or 3,000 copies, including a few hundred copies in cloth designed primarily for the library market. Wentworth says: "[The series was begun] because short fiction isn't marketable and isn't being published much. People who work in universities and write short stories need to publish books as much as other people who work in universities. It makes sense for university presses, within the limitations of their budgets, to try to help."

It is clear that writers who are fortunate enough to have a volume accepted for the series will not get rich from it. Royalties are modest: 7½ per cent on the net income from paperbacks, 10 per cent on cloth copies, and no advance. And Wentworth comments, "If we sell 1,500 copies of a $2.50 book at our average discount of 33½ per cent, the royalty payment will be less than $200." As a trial run, Illinois published Mark Costello's *The Murphy Stories* early in 1973. By December, the volume had sold 2,556 paperbacks and 594 cloth copies. Wentworth warns his potential authors, however, that Costello's success may have been an exception, since it was helped along by a major review by Vernon Cassill in *The New York Times Book Review* and another by Joyce Carol Oates in *Book World*.

Now that the first four titles have been released, what can be said about



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the series? Looked at as a group (*Curving Road*, by John Stewart; *Such Waltzing Was Not Easy* by Gordon Weaver; *A Season for Unnatural Causes*, by Philip F. O'Connor; and *Crossings*, by Stephen Minot) one cannot help but be excited by such an impressive beginning. The overall quality of the series in these volumes is exceptional. They are a pleasure to read, and they read well together, though they were not intended to be read at one fell swoop.

Beginning with John Stewart's *Curving Road*, one immediately recognizes some of the advantages and potential shortcomings of the series. For example, it seems that only one story in the book ("Blues for Pablo") has been previously published, a good sign that the series will consider collections of stories that have not all seen publication before. On the other hand, there is no other story in the volume as fine as "Blues for Pablo," and this implies that previous publication might be desirable. Stewart, who is black, also writes about West Indians and Mexicans. Accordingly, an ethnic theme unites his stories, but one can surmise that many of them were not previously published by themselves because individually they might give an impression of incompleteness. I would call them mood pieces (good ones at that) more than anything else. There are a number of related vignettes about black prostitutes and their lonely, frustrated men—often exceptionally well done.

The stories in Gordon Weaver's *Such Waltzing Was Not Easy* are also thematically united, as the title implies, since it is not used for any one story in the collection—a device also used for two of the other volumes. Weaver's world is usually masculine: fathers and sons estranged from one another, husbands rejected by their wives, young boys in broken homes, learning that the dance of life is never easily mastered. All ten stories in *Such Waltzing Was Not Easy* have been published in quarterlies. Weaver writes with ease and conviction; his work has an honesty which makes it a joy to read.

Philip F. O'Connor's *A Season for Unnatural Causes* is the most uneven volume in the series. The novella at the beginning, "The Escape Artist," is superb, a genuine achievement. Bawdy and uproariously funny, "The Escape Artist" is, unfortunately, the only good thing in O'Connor's collection. The rest of the stories (usually about marital strife) are flat and uninteresting; it is almost impossible to get involved with O'Connor's characters. There are also too many stories about academics here.

The remaining volume, Stephen Minot's *Crossings*, is beyond a doubt the finest in the series. Minot is a master craftsman of the form, carefully constructing each story with the complexity usually achieved only in longer works of fiction. There is also more variety in *Crossings* than in other volumes (something, incidentally, that adds strength to the Abrahams and Foley collections), and Minot's sense of humor contributes a certain light touch to much that he writes. "Teddy, Where Are You," "Mars Revisited," "Estuaries" and "Sausage and Beer" are examples of what a gifted writer can do with the short story.

Interestingly, Minot is the only one of these four writers whose work has appeared in the Abrahams collections during the last ten years ("Mars Revisited" appeared in the 1971 volume, reprinted from *The Virginia Quarterly Review*). Minot's stories have been published in the big magazines and the small ones; he has also edited two widely used critical texts, one designed for creative writing classes.

There is no doubt that some of our best short fiction today is being written by academic writers—as well as some of our worst. One cannot, on the other hand, think of a more logical publication outlet for teachers of creative writing than the university presses. Too often those presses have limited their publications to criticism only, a policy that has contributed to a kind of jealousy between academics who write critical works and those who teach creative writing. There is an implied relationship between the two, yet they often look down on each other.

The fact is that getting short fiction published has always been a difficult task and writers are deluding themselves if they think differently. As Joseph Blotner's recent biography of William Faulkner illustrates, even the most respected writers have trouble in publishing their stories. (Faulkner kept getting rejection slips on his short stories even after he had won the Nobel Prize.) Nevertheless, the short story has played a major role in the development of our literature since the early part of the last century. Students who take American literature courses in school are often more familiar with short works of our great writers (Hawthorne, Melville, Mark Twain, James, Sherwood Anderson, Hemingway, Faulkner) than they are with their longer works. The relationship between literature and academe being what it is, one would hope that more university presses would undertake programs similar to the Illinois Short Fiction series and that professors who edit quarterlies at universities would fight vigorously to see that they survive. Although Abrahams and Foley and the Illinois Short Fiction series suggest that the short story is in no real danger of extinction, it is nevertheless fitting that we applaud those who are actively involved in keeping the form alive. □

# Decent Work—an Impossible Ideal?

ALL THE LIVELONG DAY: The Meaning and Demeaning of Routine Work. *By Barbara Garson. Doubleday & Co. 221 pp. $7.95.*

**ROBERT CLAIBORNE**

Not so many years ago, various academicians were assuring us that we stood on the threshold of "post-industrial society" in which—thanks to automation—virtually all the dull, routine, dehumanizing jobs would vanish. That, as Barbara Garson points out, is a lot of malarkey. Routine work in America is as prevalent and as dehumanizing as it ever was; in some fields—thanks to automation—more so. Those who must endure it resent it, devise little games and stratagems to retain some portion of their humanity, but cannot (yet) conceive that matters might be ordered otherwise.

Ms. Garson did not reach these conclusions in an academic study. Rather, she distilled them from two years spent hanging about factories and offices, interviewing workers on and (usually) off the job. In several instances she took a routine job herself—from which she was usually fired in fairly short order. The result is a series of lively vignettes, in which representatives of working America are presented in their own words and the author's vivid images. *Macbird* established Ms. Garson as a witty, if somewhat slapdash, playwright; the present work should establish her as a witty, perceptive and incisive journalist. Her account of life at Bumble-Bee Tuna, Helena Rubinstein, Reader's Digest and other, pseudonymous ateliers such as "Paragon Table-Top Sports Corp." and

*Robert Claiborne's most recent books are* God or Beast: Evolution and Human Nature *(W.W. Norton) and* The Summer Stargazer: Astronomy for Absolute Beginners *(Coward, McCann & Geoghegan).*



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"Fair Plan Insurance Co." are by turns infuriating, depressing and hilarious, but invariably fascinating.

Ms. Garson is one of those uncommon writers with an almost infallible eye for details that are not merely vivid but also revealing. Unfortunately this very talent makes her book almost impossible to summarize; without the juicy, flesh-and-blood incidents it shrinks to a skeleton of generalizations which—as she herself would probably concede—are the book's weakest feature. In particular, she never comes to grips with the two central questions facing anyone concerned with humanizing work: how far can this be done without raising production costs—which are ultimately social costs? And to the extent that costs must go up, how much of an increase can reasonably be traded off against the real but intangible good of a more humane work place?

For example, the automation she describes at "United Medical Labs" has evidently brought about a much duller, more routinized life for its employees. However, it has also reduced the manufacturer's cost of some medical tests from $15 to 50 cents, which is a clear benefit to consumers of medical services—including its employees, their families and friends. Does the social loss here outweigh the social gain—and who says so?

Leaving aside this conceptual gap, Ms. Garson makes a persuasive case for a number of important generalizations about routine work in America (and by extension, in most or all other industrialized countries; she does not think matters are much different in the USSR). First, many of the demeaning aspects of routine work have nothing to do with efficiency or costs, but are merely the kind of Mickey Mouse procedures found in any authoritarian organization, deriving from the power drives and ego trips of management at one or another level. ("They come in here with all their efficiency experts. . . . I feel it's a matter of phony self-esteem"—thus the wife of a sawmill worker.) Alternatively, some of the jobs are oversimplified merely for convenience in supervision and checking: for control. "Eternal vigilance," says the author, "is the price of taking away other people's liberty." The result can often be a vicious circle: a simplified job means the worker can easily be replaced, which is good, but the simpler the job, the more quitting and absenteeism, which is bad. So management further simplifies the job. . . .

All this becomes possible only to the extent that management actively discourages the exercise of skill and imagination by its workers—which Ms. Garson is convinced it normally does. One reason is that management likes to believe it knows all the answers; another is that the workers themselves know from experience that using their imagination to improve production is most likely to mean more work for the same pay, or less. In a steel mill I worked in thirty-five years ago, most of the machinists I knew could do their operations 15 per cent to 30 per cent quicker than management's time-study men had specified. Not being fools, they kept the fact to themselves; instead of increasing war production, they gave themselves more leisure on the job. On Ms. Garson's evidence, things haven't changed much since then. There is an enormous reservoir of ingenuity and imagination in the American working force which private management neither can nor will tap. The result: both inefficiency and boredom.

But boredom—perhaps unfortunately, from management's standpoint—has not engendered mindlessness. Despite the contention of other academic gurus that workers under capitalism have become totally tranquillized by affluence and routine, Ms. Garson's routine workers know quite well that they are bored and dehumanized, and resent it. But not, unfortunately, to the point where they believe anything can be done about it.

One reason for this is the generally poor performance of trade unions, organizations which Ms. Garson views with heavy skepticism. Out-of-plant union leadership, she believes, unless extraordinarily dedicated, "becomes, like company management, another professional group with full time to devote to out-maneuvering and putting down the workers." The examples she cites certainly bear this out, and are confirmed by my own firsthand observation of such unions as the United Steelworkers and the American Federation of Musicians. Union leadership, like promotion into "bottom management" and ward politics, has become a path of upward social mobility—not infrequently passing over the backs of those lower down.

But to blame the whole thing on the unions is oversimple; union members, like nations, in the long run generally get the kind of government they deserve. If nearly all unions are insensitive to the way routine work debilitates their members, physically and psychically, an important reason is that the members themselves assume that this sort of thing, though unpleasant, is normal, natural and inevitable. Even the young, "radical" president of the UAW's Lordstown, Ohio, local declares that "it's management's prerogative to run the plant"; neither he nor any of the workers seem to have asked "Why?" And until workers begin asking the question, in large numbers, routine work will continue to be as demeaning as it always has been.

Ms. Garson sees some sort of socialism as the answer to dehumanizing work. On present performance, however, not one of our various socialist groups, factions or splinters seems able to make any useful connection with the reservoir of bitterness and boredom that routine work has created among its victims. One reason, perhaps, is that too many of their members are engaged in esoteric or abstract theoretical arguments instead of writing—or even reading—books like this one. Very much unlike Ms. Garson, they cannot decry the trees for the theoretical forest.

In rereading this, I have the feeling that I have been portraying *All the Livelong Day* as a sort of tract on the current *Weltschmerz* of the American working class. It is nothing of the sort. Middle-class radicals certainly need to read it, to get a clearer and more concrete notion of what they are talking about, but it can be read with no less pleasure and profit by anyone interested in people and the diverse ways they manage to survive. □

# Praise as a Means of Seeing

**GRACE SCHULMAN**

Harvey Shapiro's new collection of poems, *Lauds*, carries forward a theme that radiates throughout his work from two recurring words: *praise* and *song*. His concerns recall Rainer Maria Rilke's lines:

> *To praise is the whole thing! A man who can praise*
> *comes toward us like ore out of the silences*
> *of rock. . . .*
>
> (*Ten Sonnets to Orpheus*, translated by Robert Bly)

In a manner that is reminiscent of Rilke, Shapiro praises things of the world with faith that song is a way of apprehending ideal beauty. His poetry is remarkable at a time when writers of many nations, stunned by worldly destruction, have abandoned poetic devices such as imagery and metaphor because they characterize art that is too personal to transform the horrors of our age. Despite his realism, however, Shapiro celebrates actual things with an exuberance that recalls Gospel singers who transform their grief into celebration. His praise of law and harmony links him to the Biblical David who sang before the ark when the law was safe in Jerusalem. As Shapiro recounts in an early poem, David took from the ram "Ten strings to fan upon



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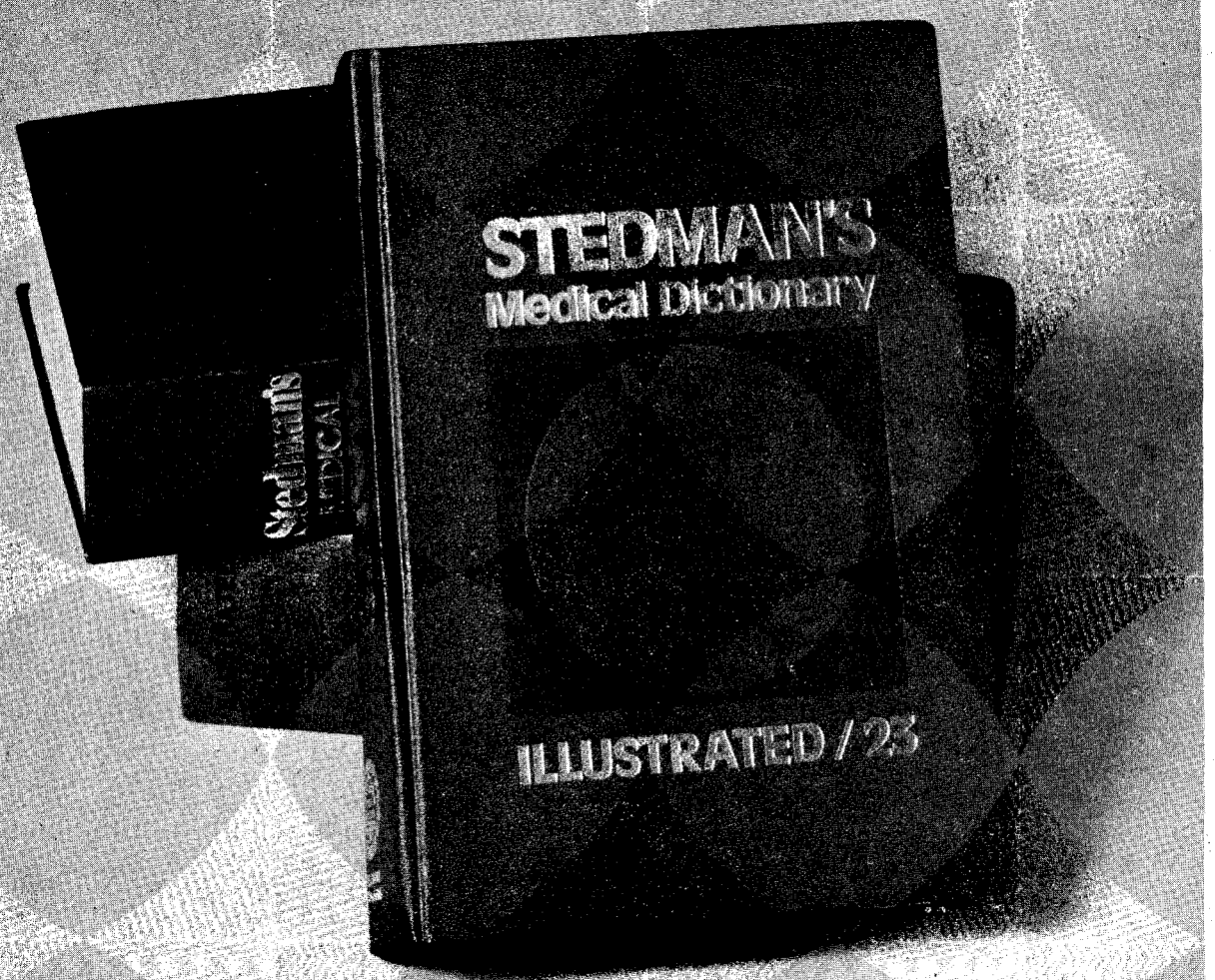


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his harp. / So that the sacrifice was song."

*The Eye.* Allan Swallow. *The Book and Other Poems.* Allan Swallow. *Mountain, Fire, Thornbush.* Allan Swallow. *Battle Report.* Wesleyan University Press. *This World.* Wesleyan University Press. *Lauds.* Sun Press.

The power of his new book rests on the evolution of the theme of praise in his writing as an artistic way of seeing what is real. In his third book, *Mountain, Fire, Thornbush* (1961), the poet envisions the modern world transfigured by ritual acts of praise and adoration. He contrasts the ideal worlds of the Greeks and Hebrews with present confusion. In the hope that our lives can be sanctified by illumination, however, he resuscitates images from the Bible, a Midrash, an 18th-century Haggadah, and from "the earliest book / Where all our childhoods signify / Themselves in open imagery."

Even in that remote time when people escaped destruction with "the pillar / Of clouds by day and the fire by night," they had, as we have now, an ordering intelligence that lights up immediate acts. From his earliest poems, Harvey Shapiro has drawn the reader's attention to his vision of past mysteries—those poetic revelations of "mountain," "fire," "thornbush"—and to his prophetic voice. His gifts are clear visual imagery, musical rightness and startling urgency. An early poem, "A Short History," illustrates his immediacy:

*Urbanity obscures the mystery.*
*From the fiery limits of His crown*
*The brawling letters broke,*
*In the beginning.*
*Violence on the historical track.*
*Then distances—prophet, king—*
*And the voltage that enabled them*
*To strike their meaning*
*And to stand. When the palmed word*
*Issued anodyne. The rest is mockery.*

In the early work, his praise of law is allegorically an idealization of art as a means of perceiving what is beautiful. Dealing with bookshelves and pictures, he looks up and sees "Seven gulls pass overhead"; he considers a time when man "stepped from the shuddering dust / And lightly tossed the syllables." Early and late, the poet risks sentimentality and avoids it; his praise is forceful because his voice is tough and hard-edged, as in "Death of a Grandmother":

*I sing her a song of praise*
*She meddled with my childhood*
*Like a witch, and I can meet her*
*Curse for curse . . . .*

*Battle Report* (1966) embodies the juxtaposition of irony and exaltation. In "The Injunction," he reiterates the Biblical command, "Choose Life!" and in "Three Days," he asks, "How is it life obviously / Does not choose you?" Although "Battle Report," the title poem, deals with an event of World War II, the poet is less concerned with battles between people than he is with inner struggles between destruction and creativity, darkness and light, artistic order and "the crazed and hooded creatures of the heart." In "Dumb Adam," Shapiro creates a burning vision of the world: "I read letters of black fire / on white fire," and, throughout the book, he gives ritual voice to the notion of chaos and law united in the same disastrous fire.

The poet sees a chaotic world that can be redeemed by art, sanctified by illumination. In "Battle Report," a prayer to the Muses offers the chief lesson of war: "Remember me. Remember through all time / That I sing this." In a wildly humorous poem called "The Old Nostalgia," the poet presents a conglomeration of sense-destroying images that results in "Songs to Sing" just as he transmutes war's destruction to song. Another humorous poem called "The National Cold Storage Company" ends with a powerful statement of art's transformation:

*The poets creep on the harp of the Bridge.*
*But see,*
*They fall into the National Cold Storage Company*
*One by one. The wind off the river is too cold,*
*Or the times too rough, or the Bridge*
*Is not a harp at all. Or maybe*
*A monstrous birth inside the warehouse*
*Must be fed by everything—ships, poems,*
*Stars, all the years of our lives.*

On the literal level, "The National Cold Storage Company" is a sign he observes beside the Brooklyn Bridge, and the Bridge recurs in his work—a symbol of idealized language as a means of seeing beauty. The juxtaposition of sign and Bridge—confusion and beauty—is basic to this poet, who looks closely at violence with faith in art's transformation of pain.

*This World* (1971) at once contains his most passionate prayer for light and his most severe irony. In "Where I Am Now" the poet asks for "a great illumining" among commonplace objects. And throughout the book, he sings of art's mysteries while contemplating lost people and sordid things: stockaded faces in the Women's House of Detention; domestic griefs; a handicapped child who "should speak / his need—to the world, / the citizens." Searching for redemption through language, he prays to bring words into a world of confusion. Just as he invoked "mountain," "fire" and "thornbush" as images of remote beauty, now he envisions order by chanting names of the changing elements:

*A practical use*
*Of mysterious names:*
*Sun, night, morning, cloud,*
*Illumination, dreams, love . . . .*

The poet's thanksgiving is most powerful in *Lauds* (1975), a word that means praises and, specifically, services sung at dawn. In the streets of the city, he seeks renewal, vowing again "To celebrate without cause whenever / I can put words to sense and music." The tone is less ironic, although his vision of order remains, symbolized by The Bridge that "Still stands, getting ancient / With its freight of poetry." Reminiscent of previous concerns, he writes of turbulence and murder, crying: "Muse / Once you made this chaos shine." The force of the new work is in the poet's growth of love:

*I hear the music from the street every night.*
*Sequestered at my desk,*
*My luminous hand finding the dark words.*
*Hard, very hard. And the music*
*From the car radios is so effortless.*
*And so I strive to join my music*
*To that music. So that*
*The air will carry my voice down*
*The block, across the bridge,*
*Through the boroughs where people I love*
*Can hear my voice, saying to them*
*Through the music that their lives*
*Are speaking to them now, as mine to me.*

Like William Carlos Williams, Shapiro writes of love with authority, toughness, and the sense of being in touch with actual things and people. In "To the Boroughs," the speaker is aware that he is torn between his identification with the world and his detachment from it; in another piece, "Veteran," Shapiro scrutinizes the division between his knowledge of belonging to the world and his wish to transcend it.

The new book has less of the deliberately colloquial flatness of the earlier poetry. Disciplined by his earlier use of set forms, he creates cadences that are natural and, at times, soaring:

*Even the unlived life within us*
*Is worth examining.*
*Maybe it is all we have.*
*The rest is burned up*
*Like fuel in the furnace.*
*But the unlived life*
*Stretches within us like a beach.*
*There is a gull's shadow on it.*
*Or it is night and the moon*
*Crusts the sand . . . .*

*Lauds* ends with "Musical Shuttle," in which the artist recaptures his beginnings:



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*However those cadences*
*Rocked me in the learning years,*
*However that soft death sang—*
*Of star become a bird's pulse,*
*Of the spanned distances*
*Where the bird's breath eddied forth—*
*I recovered the lost ground.*
*The bird's throat*
*Bare as the sand on which I walked.*
*Love in his season*
*Had moved me with that song.*

Love calls him to celebrate things of the city: traffic, the IRT, the Bridge, nearby beaches. His authority issues from his continuing faith in an aesthetic realm beyond the actual world he knows well and, knowing, praises. □

# World of the Interior

THE POETIC WORLD OF BORIS PASTERNAK. *By Olga R. Hughes. 192 pp. Princeton University Press. $9.*

**ALFRED CORN**

Few critics consider Boris Pasternak the greatest 20th-century poet writing in Russian; but readers who have never heard of any of the others know about him—that is, they know he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1958 after the publication of *Doctor Zhivago*. It is his only novel. More powerful in its anti-Sovietism than anything by Nabokov (a better novelist but lesser poet), *Doctor Zhivago* was written not by an expatriate but by a member of the Union of Soviet Writers—which, however, promptly expelled him after the Nobel announcement.

Paradox often visited Pasternak's career, and not really as an uninvited guest. Like many artists of special intelligence he organizes his fictions according to it. "We depict people in order to cloak them with a climate—a climate, or, what is one and the same thing, with nature—with our passion. We drag the everyday into prose for the sake of the poetry of it. We draw prose into poetry for the sake of the music of it." The statement comes from *Safe Conduct*, his early (1933) autobiographical memoir, a brilliantly, perhaps too brilliantly written account of the genesis of a poet, something like Wordsworth's *The Prelude*. In his teens Pasternak first chose music as his vocation, largely because of the compelling example of Scriabin, who shone for him as a paragon of the artist and more particularly as a résumé of Russian culture. Then, doubts appeared. Though Scriabin praised his disciple's gifts, Pasternak gave up music because, he says, he lacked absolute pitch. It made no difference that Wagner, Tchaikovsky and even Scriabin labored under the same disadvantage. He had made his decision, one presumably based on other factors for which lack of absolute pitch must have been only a synecdoche. Scriabin's last phase, incidentally, his efforts toward a synæsthetic fusion of all the arts, the staging of one huge performance called *Mysterium*, preferably in India, alienated Pasternak, and he described these late tendencies of Scriabin's as "ideas that reveal in a weary artist a previously concealed dilettante."

For a time, philosophy absorbed Pasternak's energies; he enrolled at the University of Marburg to study with the neo-Kantian Hermann Cohen and apparently distinguished himself. When the possibility of becoming a professor of philosophy loomed close, however, he rejected it. The decision coincided with the onrush of a first, unrequited love. He recounts how, after his courtship had been politely rebuffed, and his hopes reduced to despair, the world of nature suddenly sprang into relief—nature understood not simply as pastoral, but the whole of physical, sensory reality, the earth, the sky, the city, in their varied colors, sounds and smells, all of this felt as somehow consubstantial with the observer.

Pasternak returned to Russia by way of Italy, in particular, Venice. He seems by indirection to have found direction out. Italian Renaissance painting had a telling effect on Pasternak. His Italian journey was the concluding step that revealed to him his true vocation, as poet. For Pasternak, then, poetry may be seen as lying within the pentagram described by music, philosophy, love, physical nature and Renaissance religious humanism in painting.

Pasternak's concern with musical analogies in verbal composition isn't unique to him, of course. In the 20th century all the arts have aspired to the condition of music, with the frequent exception of music itself. The title poem of Pasternak's collection *Themes and Variations* (1923) goes farthest in the direction of musical form, still keeping, however, a modicum of paraphrasable content. Also, critics with an eye or an ear for it have described his collection of short stories as a classical four-movement symphony, the first story in sonata allegro form, the second, a scherzo, and so forth.

Philosophy is present in Pasternak's writings—too much so in the novel, probably—though Dr. Cohen would no doubt have considered Pasternak's statements as insufficiently clear or rigorous. Many of his formulations revolve around one central insight: when we perceive and feel the world intensely, we are the world, and we truly *exist*, in some sense eternally. This is a fertile point of departure for an artist, one found mainly among great poets and bad ones. In Pasternak, the theme finds beautiful, powerful expression. When, on the other hand, he ventures into historical or religious philosophy (mostly through the intermediary of characters in *Doctor Zhivago*), his footing is less sure; still, his statements are always interesting.

In Pasternak, the theme of love and verbal pictorialism intertwine precisely as the earlier quotation suggests. In love, we see truly, we receive a vision of the beloved in a "climate," a world; and this world proves to be interior, a heartland. As in Italian painting, the writer discovers poses and attitudes where the real and ideal coincide in one figure, a figure in an environment of radiant details.

Clearly and concisely written, Olga

*Alfred Corn's first book of poems,* All Roads at Once, *appeared with Viking Press earlier this year.*

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R. Hughes's *The Poetic World of Boris Pasternak* is the best book in English about him, one that would be valuable both to the expert and the layman. The book has generous excerpts from Pasternak's writings, the poetry given both in Russian and good English translation. Hughes argues that aesthetics is the most fruitful entry into Pasternak's writings, and I've followed her lead in this review. She points out that aesthetics in Pasternak shouldn't be distinguished from his principle themes—the two categories always overlap. The book, then, is organized as a kind of aesthetic and thematic index, singling out major phases of the poet's thought: the genesis and nature of poets and poetry, the relationship of art to reality, to time and "eternity," and, finally, the poet's responsibility to society. In a rough way these topic headings, listed in order, trace the development of Pasternak's career and the shifts of emphasis during his creative lifetime.

The last phase begins with World War II, the period of Pasternak's most explicit concern with society and history. This period takes part of its character from Pasternak's repudiation of his earlier, elaborate style (described by Nina Berberova as "Soviet rococo"), in favor of plainer, more direct statement. He wrote *Doctor Zhivago* during this period and fewer poems; nevertheless, these are among his best, and especially the "poems of Yurii Zhivago," which conclude the novel. The novel itself, the work of one of the century's great modernists, paradoxically takes its place in the Russian tradition that moves from the 19th century and Tolstoy through Pasternak to the present and Solzhenitsyn. In that tradition, the Russian novelist is a kind of prophet, and his prophecies take the form of large historical frescoes that make palpable the dialectic of time and eternity. In *Doctor Zhivago*, a very concrete referent for that dialectic is the counterpointed juxtaposition of prose and poetry in the novel's structure. Though the poems by placement have the last word, Pasternak shouldn't be viewed finally as either the Poet or the Prose Writer. He is, paradoxically, the relationship between the two. □

# THEATRE / Harold Clurman

The Brecht-Weill *Threepenny Opera* is surely one of the masterworks of the 20th-century theatre. It is peculiarly ravishing: it enchants with sweet sickness. Its impudent snarl delights—most strangely. It is defiant and yet very nearly funereal. The mournful alternates with the heroic. Heartbroken, it manages to laugh. The wretchedness of Germany after World War I, its baleful future, its hope and failure are all here. Beneath the mockery and challenge, it presages the approaching defeat. There is a sense of doom in it, yet it inspires elation by a consciousness of the living moment. It is a play of a befouled time struggling to express its malady and to overcome it. Much of its music has a heavy, dragging beat of depression, but along with this we hear in it a will to fight the way to courage and light.

That was the Germany of the time, and Brecht was wholly of it. As certain artists in the past sought refuge from dark days of social and personal disease by turning to the Church, Brecht found salvation in a humanistic Marxism. But in 1928, when *The Threepenny Opera* was produced, he was not yet there; he was intellectually convinced of his dawning belief but not yet possessed by it. Much of his skepticism (never altogether dispelled) and a masochistic anguish which the war's aftermath had instilled in him still remained. This ambivalence is what makes the play an enduring work. It is not "propaganda," though the political Right as well as the Left saw it as such and made its first production an occasion for scandal and riot.

If without preconception one leaves oneself open to the full effect of *The Threepenny Opera*, one senses that Brecht was himself infected with the romantic glow of decay, even as he reviled it and aspired to liberate himself from it. Hence the pervasive irony of the work which, together with Weill's telltale score, at once embraces and jeers at the schmaltzy lubricity of the surrounding scene. This side of the duality is sounded in the words and music in which the gangster Macheath and his consort Jenny sweetly recall (with acid admixture) the wonderful time (literally translated) "in that bordello where we kept house." The opposing note is struck in the foreboding of the play's last lines: the rich (again literally) "eat up the poor man's bread. For they [the poor] are in darkness and the others are in the light. And you see the rich in brightness, those in darkness drop from sight." Between these antipodes there is the guying denunciation of Macheath's self-defense which, in Eric Bentley's translation, reads: "We artisans of the lower middle-class, who work with honest jimmies on the cash boxes of small shopkeepers, are being ruined by large concerns backed by the banks. What is a picklock to a bank share? What is the burgling of a bank to the founding of a bank? What is the murder of a man to the employment of a man?"

When Kurt Weill, whose music marvelously matches the originality, wit and poetry of Brecht's writing, undertook his first American assignment with the Group Theatre's production of Paul Green's *Johnny Johnson*, he told the acting company that, for him as much as for Brecht, understanding each word of the verses was more important than an appreciation of vocal quality. For this reason Brecht and he preferred actors who enunciated clearly to singers who were chiefly concerned with the tones they emitted.

Perhaps the most distressing thing about the production now playing at the Vivian Beaumont Theatre of Lincoln Center is that no more than half of the lyrics are readily intelligible. The producers call special attention to the new translation by Ralph Manheim and John Willett. It may be excellent, though for those who know the extraordinary terseness of the original German, no translation can be altogether satisfactory. But if we fail to hear it quite distinctly, pleasure in the play is well-nigh lost.

Directed by Richard Foreman, the production is certainly "different" from any I've seen in New York, Berlin, Tokyo and Moscow, but not happily so. One immediately striking difference is Douglas Schmidt's setting, which has a stimulatingly modern look. It consists of a naked

HOPE

*When the governors were knaves*
*the people suffered*
*more than is usual.*
*Should power pass into the hands of fools*
*the suffering*
*will be more general, more intense.*
*But hope will sustain itself in the hearts of some:*
*those who believe that God lives, and is benevolent;*
*those who have not heard*
*that the oceans*
*have begun to die.*

Babette Deutsch



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stage framed by a metal structure to which are appended rotating, rising and descending wheels; a black background with sectional panels, and a battery of lights—all lending the stage a feeling of industrial environment. (It is reminiscent, for those who have seen them, of Meyerhold's constructionist settings between 1920 and 1925.) We soon perceive that the production indeed is "different" but entirely misconceived. The basic tone is grim, lapidary, with some resemblance to that of a demonstration in the 1960s.

The actors make "big" points by shouting. Brecht's style eschews this: shouting is counterindicated. His whole method can be summed up in the phrase, "Cool it." Brecht rarely proclaims: he is insidious, sly. He lays on slush—along with Weill—as a device to heighten the sting of his intention. His characters usually address the audience with an unctuous plausibility, as if to woo us. In this production, several songs are delivered in strident wrath. The *Threepenny* style is no secret: listen to the German recording made in 1958 under Lotte Lenya's supervision. She herself, the Jenny of the original Berlin production, is delicate, sprightly, a cunning soubrette. There is a veiled mystery about her, and when she declares that she will kill all who had failed to recognize her worth she flicks the word "all" from her lips in an easy whip of contempt. (Jenny at the Vivian Beaumont—Ellen Greene—has been turned into a brazen horror.) To roar Brecht because he had revolutionary convictions is to equate him with the most guileless of American "art-is-a-weapon" amateurs.

Richard Foreman is a talented director. I liked several of his previous essays: *Dr. Sealevy*, for example. But here he distracts us from a number of songs by having all sorts of "mysterious" by-play going on behind and beside the singers, adding to our difficulty in understanding what they say. Finally the elaborate and complex scenic scheme becomes a hindrance to enjoyment: it is all too busy.

So gifted and delightful a comedian as Raul Julia suffers a loss from this treatment. One can't make out how to view his Macheath. He is not funny, not raffishly attractive, not representative of anything except a fake macabre, which is the chief stylistic attribute of the production.

So much ability and effort have been expended to give us a new, tough, and to those not previously acquainted with it, puzzling *Threepenny*. As Brecht has written, "Between producing a shock and getting on people's nerves there is a difference. . . ."

In a dreary time of proliferating ugliness, beauty may serve as protest. There is loveliness in *The Belle of Amherst*, a compilation by Timothy Helgeson of biographical material about Emily Dickinson and some of her poetry, the one felicitously merging with the other (Longacre Theatre).

Julie Harris, the sole player, is a miracle of purity and devotion. The evening imparts an impression of what was bracing in the New England of the 1800s. Ms. Harris does not attempt to "be" or to impersonate Emily Dickinson—the poet would not have possessed the actress' concentrated energy—but has made herself a medium through which Dickinson's artistic personality, in its lyric phase, shines radiantly. Only in retrospect do we realize what a technical triumph we have witnessed, the superb diction, the theatrical address. □

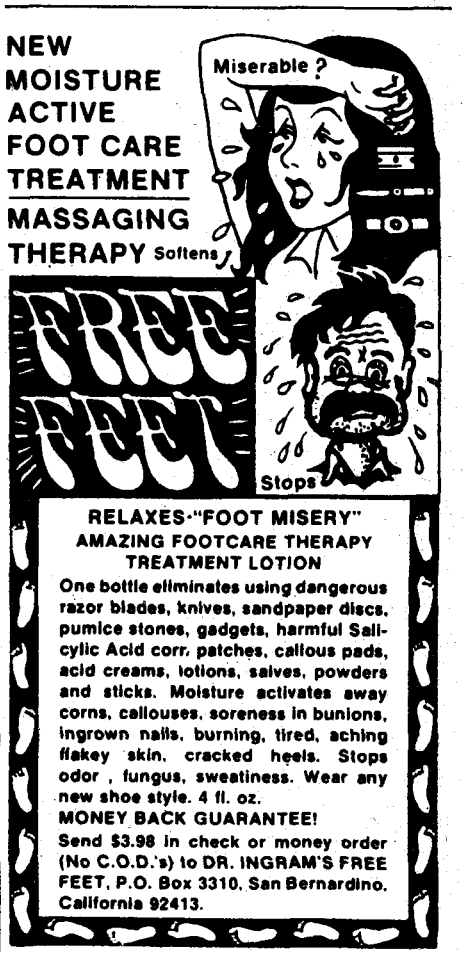
# DANCE

## NANCY GOLDNER

Few choreographers have understood as well as Frederick Ashton that love is the proper subject of dance. His most original treatment of love is *Enigma Variations*, because it travels beyond youthful romanticism into friendship between man and wife, man and man. Those quiet "conversations" he arranged between Elgar and his friends and acquaintances amount, in their utterly unassuming ways, to a stunning *coup de théâtre*. It is a ballet with many of the virtues of a play, expressing what would seem to be an impossible sensibility for dance—affection. When word got out that Ashton was thinking about Turgenev's *A Month in the Country*, it was tempting to hope that the impending collaboration would yield a second "impossible" masterpiece. It was produced by the Royal Ballet last February in London and has been brought overseas for the company's engagements at the Metropolitan Opera and Kennedy Center this spring.

Toward the end of this one-act ballet, when Natalia Petrovna and Beliaev finally declare themselves lovers in a *pas de deux*, the young tutor wafts the elderly woman forward in a lazy zigzag path while her arms twine about her in the air. She could be nestling in silk or idly fingering chains of pearls, but in fact it's the luxuriousness of love she is touching. That moment is the one moment of truth in *A Month in the Country*, true to the emotion, true to the heat of summer, true to Chopin, and true to the economic status of the household. Ashton probably knew that in those dallying arms he had hit on a good one, for later on he uses the gesture as a motif of Natalia's lovesickness. A good deal of the ballet is taken up with love dances, and although they have neither the effectiveness nor the beauty of this last one, they could add up to a pleasant suite of *pas de deux*.

If Ashton had composed a suite of dances called *A Month in the Country*, only the title would have been curious. Since he has taken on the play as well as its title, the ballet is curious. It tries to be both a study of family life and of three people's love lives. On the one hand, it is about a triangle among the tutor, Natalia and her teenaged ward, Vera. On the other hand, it is a genre painting—by virtue of the other characters and the magnificent set by Julia Trevelyan Oman, whose meticulous detailing of a drawing room, down to a fragile birdcage standing by the piano in a nook of the room—and that commits Ashton to much more than *pas de deux*. The trouble is that, however lovely the two aspects of the work may be, they are out of synchronization with each other. In keeping with the set's character, Ashton creates a delicious slice-of-life dance about a search for the master's keys. Only Ashton could make a dance out of such activity, and only he could unify it so drolly. Although this dance's source, the mismatched lovers' quartet from *The Dream*, is obvious, Ashton's steal from himself actually adds to the charm. Yet for all its humor and warmth, it is an inserted paragraph, almost an advertisement of Ashton's unique skill with the mundane. So is the maid's dance;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beguiling in itself; so are Kolia's spunky variations with his toys. And so, even, is the shadowy presence of Natalia's long-suffering admirer and the glimpses, through an open door, of other characters pausing on the small bridge at the back of the stage. These dance variations and bits of direction are ways of opening up the love triangle into genre form—expanding the dance into speech, as it were—and they all creak.

Meanwhile, the love story must accommodate itself to dance and literary form; it must be plotted. Because the play has no plot other than an account of what people are thinking, Ashton invents one by using the device of entrance and exit. It is not unfair, I think, to describe the essence of this ballet as a series of entrances by a third party and the hurried exit by the most compromised party. When that kind of structure is paced at a quick trot, the result is closer to French bedroom farce than psychological drama. And when the choreography's tempo is similarly overheated, farce borders on burlesque. At first I surmised that Ashton's fussily curlicued dances had a double purpose: to suggest the restlessness throbbing under ennui, and to elucidate Chopin's core of vitality. Slowly, however, the dancing begins to outpace Chopin, rendering the former nervously bombastic and the latter pecked to bits.

Does Ashton read Turgenev as Feydeau gone hysterical? Even that interpretation would be more plausible than the one emerging from the ballet's climax. Little Vera surprises her beloved tutor and her mother-figure in an embrace. She calls the entire household to the scene of the crime, and hurls accusing fingers at the illegal lovers. The denouement finds Natalia gesturing wildly at her husband in the "who, me?" tone of television situation comedies. Meanwhile, Chopin is forced into being a shrill accomplice to the action. At this point, the complete mangling of the play's themes is beside the point, although the perversity with which Ashton changes Vera from sacrificial lamb to vindictive brat is too gross to pass over. Still, were one to allow Ashton full license to adapt the play "freely," as the program note says, it would yet be a deeply troubling adaptation in its refusal to support the opinion of literary historians that Turgenev is a precursor of Chekhov.

Can a dance give life to people's inner lives? Ultimately, perhaps not, but Graham, Tudor and Ashton himself in *Enigma Variations*, have given us some very beautiful and convincing moments in their struggles with the challenge. In *A Month in the Country* Ashton puts himself in front of the biggest mountain of all and then scurries around it to the other side.

Of all the Royal Ballet's tricks, my favorite is to watch the dancers pretend that their material is wonderful. The program including *A Month in the Country* was a superb showcase for such skill, rounded out as it was by two new miserable though harmless Kenneth MacMillan pieces, *Rituals* and *Elite Syncopations*. *A Month in the Country*, however, will not absorb virtuoso camouflage. It is too serious in intention and occasionally too good. Lynn Seymour's trilling, trembling feet were ravishing, as were Anthony Dowell's arabesques and transitions through Ashton's favored fourth position. As Natalia, Seymour went through the acting with unconvincing conviction. Dowell, as Beliaev, was adrift when not in arabesque. Two of the company's finest actors, Alexander Grant and Derek Rencher, in subsidiary roles, were victims of Ashton's atypically faint etching of character. They seemed to be improvising. For Vera, Ashton chose a youngster from the ensemble, Denise Nunn. Her still immature body is right in terms of drama, her unpointed feet wrong for dance.

Although Laura Dean belongs to the growing family of minimalist choreographers, her newest work, *Song*, has the blunt charm of primitive art. Performed at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in late April-early May, *Song* is the most pleasing work I have seen from her, its rudimentary formulas more vigorously than puritanically put forth. Seven singer-dancers in red (!) silk (!) shirts and mauvish-pink pants repeat simple, or minimal, movement phrases over and over to the steady pulse of a few chords played on two pianos. *Song* is relatively elaborate in the sense that its movement themes are many, are put to canonical variations, and are otherwise changed by means of shifting group patterns. There is also some chanting of the sound "hey," whose harmonies have the sweet ring of religious song. Dean has also choreographed a few proper dance phrases, which she runs through the above-mentioned channels of permutation. These parts add up to the most entertaining moments of the fifty-minute *Song*, but the key theatrical interest lies in the unexpected relationship between an insistently steady musical pulse and the dancers' shifts in formation and step. Although the formations are enchanting for their simplicity and dead-on symmetry, and powerful in the Rockette way they satisfy one's appetite for law and order, the most striking aspect about them is that in changing gears they function as musical modulations. They make the droning chords appear to change keys. At the same time that dance is coloring our perceptions about music, the music is doing the same to the dance. The steady pulse subdues and smooths out the radical dance changes. Watching *Song* is like watching a team of soldiers about-face continually and still appear to be heading in the direction in which they started out.

It's this kind of catch that endows Dean's work with charm. By emphasizing the illusory possibilities of steady rhythm and repetition, she has come a long way from doctrinaire minimalism. By rendering these possibilities in a vividly exterior dimension, she has come a long way from the whirling-dervish mentality from which many minimalists draw inspiration. However, Dean has not yet broken with dance-as-meditation. *Song* duly begins with a long spell of spinning, and though she gaudies it up with changing arm motions, it is still anti-audience: to get the value of spinning one must spin. "Spinning," writes Dean in a program note, "is a direct physical connection to the whirling motion of the mind that I experienced while sitting. The sitting had come out of a theatre work I did in 1967 when I thought out a monologue instead of speaking it to the audience." For one who is still in the process of sitting, walking, chanting and spinning her way out of babyhood, *Song* may represent baby's first sentence. It's a lovely one, although any comparison between 31-year-old Dean and 5-year-old Mozart would be premature.


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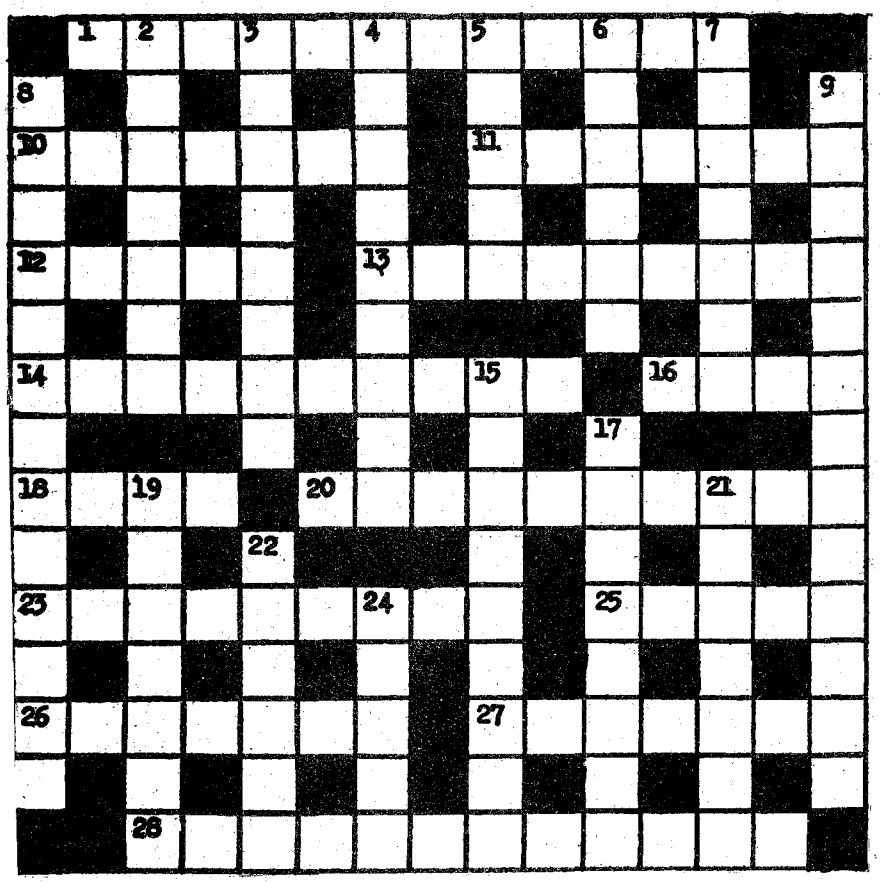
# Crossword Puzzle No. 1633

**FRANK W. LEWIS**



## ACROSS

1 and 12 The Detroit Lions, figuratively, or what they might show. (12,5)
10 Double zero thrown in a sign of subtraction might be portentous. (7)
11 On the level, is part of sitting up late a usual high spot? (7)
12 See 1 across
13 A form of transportation before carts designed for absolute rulers. (9)
14 Aerie high above the gentle sea's possible turbulence. (6,4)
16 Natural power, alternatively a figurative trace. (4)
18 In short, it might herald the fall of a clan. (4)
20 What one associates with him is really a place in Ireland. (6,4)
23 On the podium, or on the board? (9)
25 You might so insinuate it's simply decapitated. (5)
26 I had what looks like ten to shake, silly! (7)
27 You might mark him zero in biology for not recognizing it. (7)
28 Burns might be so described, with an M.A. or M.S., possibly. (6,6)

## DOWN

2 and 19 Not what hungry gate-crashers might be doing, but they're certainly offensive groups. (7,7)
3 When an animal comes up to a different sort of creature, shoot this way, possibly. (8)
4 In a different case we get up dirty, and get kept this way. (9)
5 Grist for the mill, as one might say. (5)
6 With a parvenu, ancestors are bound to show a slight difference. (6)
7 Where you get to pull a fish up? (There are such islands.) (7)
8 Is the tune squashed into a few bars and perhaps put into a cylinder? (10,3)
9 Do they involve the patter of feet more or less matched and regularly presented where such might be heard? (7,6)
15 Bad grades get corrected to show how one behaved if not a steady course follower. (9)
17 Such heartless advertising implies making a few suggestions. (8)
19 See 2 down
21 Go off quietly? Anything but! (7)
22 Face-tickling shows a sour expression. (6)
24 Where one might find ready-made food for the South American. (5)

## SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1632

ACROSS: 10 Asepsis; 11 Fetters; 12, 13 and 14 Evade the issue; 15 Octet; 17 Ptomaine; 21 Stressed; 23 Lucre; 26 Meals; 28 Ski; 30 and 29 down Safe and sound; 31 Equinox; 32 Decanter; 33 Adores. DOWN: 1 and 25 We are not amused; 2 Inexact; 3 Haste; 5 Rifle; 6 Tutti; 7 Emerson; 8 Sister; 9 Isotopes; 16, 1 and 4 The Wright Brothers; 18 Old Timer; 19 and 29 across All's well; 20 Reflexes; 22 Traffic; 24 Cleaner; 27 Spain; 28 Sedge.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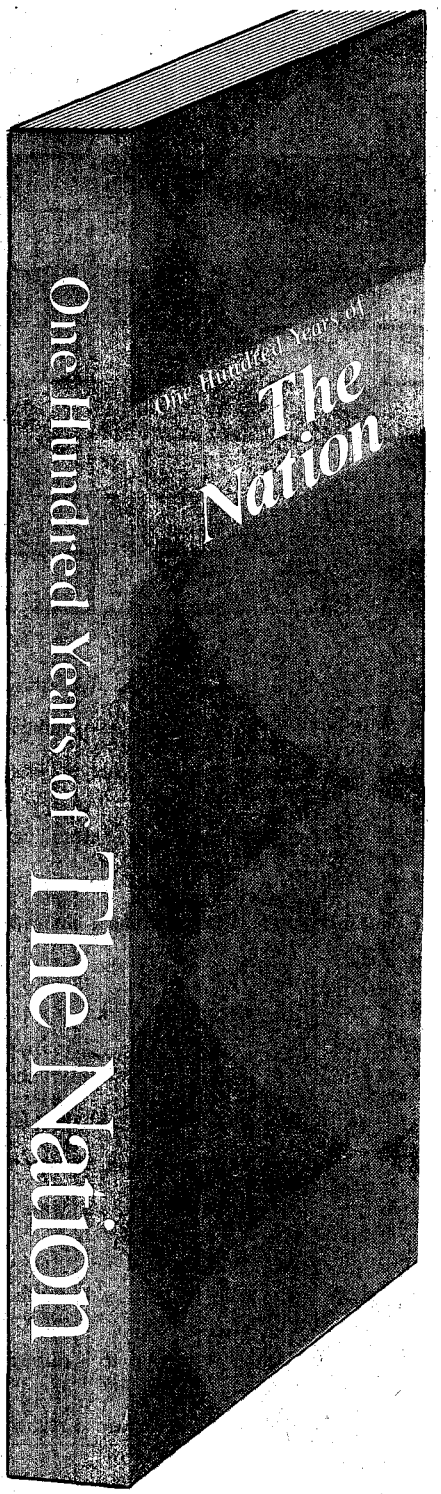


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